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Revanth gets notice over 'doctored' video of Shah

Four office-bearers of Telangana Congress also summoned by the Delhi Police; cases filed in Delhi, Assam, Maharashtra over video, which shows Home Minister's comments on quota; one arrested

Vijaita Singh
Alisha Dutta
Samridhi Tewari
NEW DELHI

The police in Delhi, Assam, and Maharashtra filed three separate cases and arrested at least one person – a Congress functionary from Assam – in connection with a doctored video of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's April 23 speech in Telangana regarding reservation.

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, and four other Congress office-bearers in the State also found themselves embroiled in the controversy on Monday, as the Delhi Police issued notice to them under Section 91 (summons to produce documents) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

In a spot: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy in Yadgir, Karnataka on Monday. PTI

A government source told *The Hindu* that the notice to appear before the Delhi Police on Wednesday has been sent to Mr. Reddy as he is the president of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC).

"The video that looks *prima facie* 'altered' was posted on X [formerly Twitter] by the Telangana Congress. Being the State president of the party, Mr. Reddy has to explain the origin of the video," the source said, adding that if Mr. Reddy does not appear on the scheduled date, another notice will be sent. The video was fact-checked by a user on X the same day, and that user will be asked to join the probe to trace the video, the source further said.

On reservation

While in the doctored video, Mr. Shah is heard saying that the BJP intends to eradicate reservation for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes, in the original video he says the party intends to remove the 4% reservation for Muslims in Telangana.

"When the BJP will form the government, it will end the unconstitutional reservation for Muslims in Telangana. This is the right of ST/SCs and OBCs and they will get their rights," says Mr. Shah in the original video, at a rally in Chevella.

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JD(S) set to suspend Hassan MP Prajwal over video scandal

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Amid growing pressure on the Janata Dal (Secular) to take action against Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, accused of being involved in a sexual exploitation video scandal, the regional party, which is in an electoral alliance with the BJP, is set to suspend him from the party on Tuesday.

On Monday, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) set up to probe the case commenced its work while the MP, who is a grandson of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, is believed to have left for Europe on Saturday morning.

Former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, distancing himself and Mr. Deve Gowda from the scandal that has rocked Karnataka, told mediapersons at Shivamogga that Mr. Prajwal would be suspended.

"I had appealed to the former Prime Minister

Prajwal Revanna

seeking action. It was decided yesterday itself that we would suspend him."

He, however, did not clarify whether only Mr. Prajwal would be suspended or action would be taken against his father H.D. Revanna, a former Minister and sitting MLA from Holenarasipura in Hassan, who is also named in a complaint to the State Women Commission.

Home Minister G. Parameshwara has already announced that all facets of the complaint will be probed into.

After several pen drives containing videos allegedly involving Mr. Prajwal came out in public days ahead of the election early last week, the Karnataka government on Sunday constituted the SIT to probe the scandal that is believed to involve several women in about 3,000 files.

The Congress has upped the ante seeking answers from the JD(S) as well as the saffron party on the scandal. Mr. Prajwal, the JD(S) candidate, is pitted against the Congress nominee Shreyas Patel in Hassan where the election has been completed in the second phase.

A formal announcement on suspension is expected after discussion at the core committee meeting that has been convened in Hubballi.

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NEARBY

How did PM let a 'criminal' escape? asks Priyanka

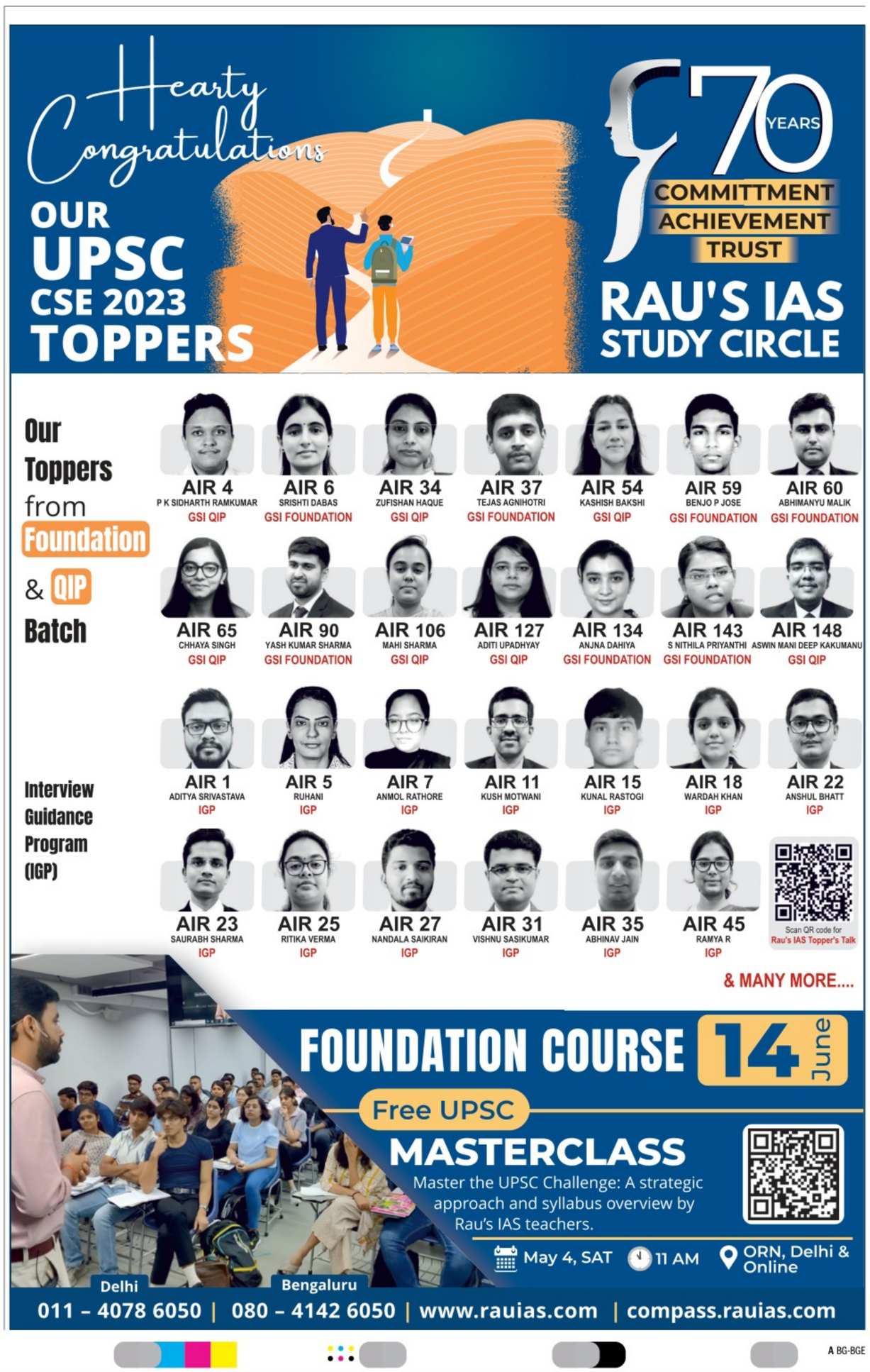
KALABURAGI
Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi on how a "rakshas" could be allowed to leave the country, referring to JD(S) leader Prajwal Revanna. » Page 4

Construction workers' welfare board pulled up

BENGALURU
The High Court of Karnataka has pulled up the Karnataka Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board for "keeping in cold storage" the applications by daughters of two construction labourers seeking money for their college fees. » Page 2

Water ride

At snail's pace: Vehicles pass through a waterlogged road on the banks of Dal Lake after heavy rainfall in Srinagar on Monday. NISSAR AHMAD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Five students from city drown at Mekedatu

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Five college students drowned at the Sangama picnic spot at Mekedatu on the outskirts of Kanakapura on Monday.

The victims were part of a group of 12 students studying in different colleges. They had gone from Bengaluru on a sightseeing trip in a hired vehicle.

The deceased have been identified as Varsha, 20, of KLE College, Rajajinagar; Arpita N.L. 20, II year engineering student of RR College; Neha, 19, a BSc student of KLE College, RR Nagar; Abhishek, 20, hailing from Bihar, a computer science student of Malleshwaram Government College; and Tejas, 21, II year BCA student of Vijayanagar Government College, the police said.

The 12 students were friends since their pre-university days and had gone on a picnic with permission of their parents.

The group reached Mayura guesthouse parking lot in the afternoon and ventured into the river through a side route. The group did not know swimming and ventured into the water holding each other's hands.

While getting into the water, a few of them slipped and dragged the others along in panic. Seven others, who were following them, managed to escape and raised an alarm.

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Srinivas Prasad, BJP MP, passes away

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Bharatiya Janata Party MP and former Union Minister V. Srinivas Prasad, 76, who was undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Bengaluru, passed away on Monday. The influential Dalit leader represented Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha constituency six times and Nanjangud Assembly segment twice. He is survived by wife Bhagyalakshmi and three daughters.

V. Srinivas Prasad

Mr. Prasad, who was ailing for some time, had announced his retirement from politics in March, marking an end to his 50 years in public life.

The last rites of the departed leader will be performed as per Buddhist rituals at B.R. Ambedkar Educational and Cultural Trust on Mananthavadi Road in Mysuru Tuesday. A follower of B.R. Ambedkar's ideals, Mr. Prasad had converted to Buddhism.

His electoral career began with his foray in the byelections to Krishnaraja Assembly constituency in 1974 when he contested as an independent.

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» PAGE 2

Sunrisers throw up template for T20 batting

Armed with a no-fear approach and bolstered by the Impact Player rule, the 2016 champion has notched up gargantuan totals and emerged as a trailblazer

Power Play: While Head and Abhishek have gone on the attack right from the word go, Klaasen has sustained the momentum with his punishing blade. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR, K. BHAGYA PRAKASH & K.R. DEEPAK

R. Kaushik

Two-thirds of the way into the league phase of the tournament, this edition of the IPL has already been one of plenty. Plenty of fours and sixes. Plenty of totals in excess of 200. Plenty of joy for the willow-wielders. And plenty of agony and anguish for the hapless bowlers who have been reduced to bowling machines, serfs who are only there to do the power-packed batters' bidding.

Among those wreaking the most havoc is the batting group from Sunrisers Hyderabad. The 2016 champion has been the talk of the cricketing world, defeats in its last two encounters notwithstanding. Twice this season, SRH has broken the record for the highest total in IPL history, backing up 277 for three against Mumbai Indians at home with 287 for three against Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium. Its unfettered approach to the Powerplay has subsequently found resonance in other teams; only the other night, Punjab Kings mounted the highest successful chase in the IPL, against Kolkata Knight Riders, sending out a strong message that there is no such thing as a 'safe' score any longer.

There is much to admire in the manner in which SRH has gone about its business. It already had a strong batting core, but the acquisition in the December auction of Travis Head, the explosive Australian opener, has lent a whole new dynamic. Head may not be the most appealing aesthetically, but what he lacks in grace and elegance, he more than makes up for with his ferocious onslaughts based on unmatched hand-eye coordination and a comprehensive understanding of what his strengths – and his limitations – are.

In a way, SRH was compelled to recalibrate its approach following a disastrous 2023 season which it finished at the bottom of the pile. Despite the resources at its command, it was timid and hesitant with the bat, and in a format where the bat is the one that rules the roost, that was a guaranteed recipe for disaster. Stung by its last-place finish, the ownership group rang in the changes. Out went West Indian legend Brian Lara, who was replaced as head coach by Daniel Vettori. With the call to divest Aiden Markram of the captaincy, SRH identified Pat Cummins, Australia's undisputed leader, as best suited to helm their campaign. SRH pursued the quick with single-minded zeal at the auction, dishing out ₹20.50 crore to secure his services. Against that backdrop, Head was a steal at ₹6.8 crore. That it is money well spent is all too obvious.

Brutal batting tree

SRH isn't all about Head alone, of course. The devastating left-hander sits atop a brutal batting tree with Abhishek Sharma, his opening partner, and South African stumper Heinrich Klaasen as equal contributors to the carnage that hasn't spared any bowler. The franchise has invested hugely in Abhishek over the years and the young left-hander is finally beginning to repay the faith, while Klaasen's class – pardon the pun – has seldom been in doubt. He, more than anyone else, has ensured that the exceptional starts provided by the fearless Head-Abhishek combine haven't gone to waste.

There was a time when teams targeted conservative PowerPlays. They constructed their innings around keeping wickets in hand and teeing off in the last quarter, an approach that doesn't always pay off. SRH has radically transformed thought processes by going hard at the bowling from the get-go. The profusion of batting riches – the impressive Nitish Kumar Reddy has been the find of the season, Abdul Samad has embraced greater consistency in his role as finisher and Shahbaz Ahmed has come into his own – as well as the introduction of the Impact Player has allowed it to keep going hard even if a couple of wickets tumble in quick succession. The onus is no longer on beginning quietly and finishing in a frenzy; SRH has treated every over as a PowerPlay over, with spectacular results.

This approach comes with its attendant risks, needless to say. There will be days – or is it nights? – when the implosion will be dramatic and decisive, like against Royal Challengers Bengaluru last week. Chasing 207 for victory at home, SRH stumbled to 56 for four after five overs, its reply in a shambles with its big guns silenced. Even so, there was not even a token effort to bat out the overs, no overt bid to reduce the margin of defeat with an eye on the net run rate. Such mundane thinking has gone out the window.

Even when staring a huge loss in the face, SRH kept attacking, Cummins briefly raising visions of an unexpected victory. It eventually recovered to finish on 171 for eight, beaten by 35 runs. 'A matter of six deliveries,' is how they described their abortive chase. So simple, perhaps too much so, some might say, but how can you argue with a side that has smashed 112 sixes in nine matches to date?

Head has walked away with all the accolades, which is perhaps understandable because he is a celebrated international star who boasts hundreds in the final of the World Test Championship and the 50-over World Cup, both against India. His franchise-high 338 runs have come at an average of 42.25 and a humongous strike-rate of 211.25. He has unleashed 40 fours and 19 sixes; in effect, he has hit a boundary every 2.7 balls. Those are exceptional stats.

Perfect partner

But Abhishek hardly suffers in comparison. With 303 runs to his name, he is his team's second highest scorer. Remarkably, his strike-rate of 214.89 is more than three higher than Head's. He has hit a boundary every 2.8 balls, and while his four-count (22) is nearly half of Head's, he has hammered a whopping 27 sixes. It's no wonder then that, against Delhi Capitals, SRH ended the PowerPlay at 125 without loss, the most runs ever in the first six overs of a T20 game.

Then, there is Klaasen – 295 runs, strike-rate 185.53, just nine fours but an extraordinary 28 sixes. Admittedly, some of the grounds at this year's IPL, like at every year's IPL, haven't been the largest, but the distance these sixes have travelled would lead one to believe that no matter where, they would still have been sixes. That's an offshoot of the prep that goes in behind the scenes. There is a concerted attempt to smite the ball longer and harder, with range-hitting a fearsome, awe-inspiring and intimidating experience on the eve of a match.

The key to being a T20 destroyer is shedding the fear of getting out. That goes against the basic grain of batsmanship. Even in this world of instant gratification and the overwhelming desire to get into franchise cricket – playing for the country isn't quite the ultimate aim, as it used to be in a more relaxed era – young kids are taught to put a price on their wicket in their formative years. To therefore bat with freedom, and without the attendant fear of being dismissed to a 'poor' stroke, calls for an equanimity and a mindset that can and must overlook the consequences of getting out. It's not as if SRH is the first team to introduce this concept, but no one has espoused it more stridently and consistently than the Cummins-inspired outfit that still has plenty of runs, and sixes, in it.

While SRH has been an extraordinary front-runner, it hasn't quite mastered the art of chasing yet. Three of its four losses have come when its has batted second, and its has chased successfully just once, which might point to a soft underbelly that other sides would have taken note of. That's an area of concern, no matter what spin the team management might seek to put on it, but one can rest assured that it will be addressed post-haste, if it already hasn't been.

Is SRH's approach capable of being emulated? Can it be the trend-setter, the trailblazer that can inspire others to follow suit? On the evidence of IPL 2024, most certainly. SRH has redefined the art of run-making, especially while batting first, in the 20-over format but for others – franchises and international teams – to follow suit will require not just a change in mindset but also bringing together resources that can facilitate that methodology. It's easier, if that's the right word, to piece a franchise team together because one can draw from so many options, from so many countries. To assemble a national side in like fashion will be a more daunting and trying exercise, with the added rider that the Impact Player hasn't yet percolated to country versus country battle.

T20 games are no longer won and lost in the PowerPlay, but the tempo is often set in the first six overs when only two fielders are allowed outside the 30-yard circle. When the run-rate is in the 15s after six overs, it's relatively easier to ride on that momentum, as SRH's largely productive middle order has showcased. Abhishek and Head starts – apologies again for the horrible pun – have been integral to the fortunes of SRH, which has unveiled a style that is certain to become a T20 template.

THE GIST

- Stung by its last-place finish in 2023, the Sunrisers ownership group rung in the changes
- It already had a strong batting core, but the acquisition of Head in the December auction has lent a whole new dynamic
- Abhishek, his opening partner, and South African stumper Klaasen are equal contributors to the carnage that hasn't spared any bowler
- Cummins' men have treated every over as a PowerPlay over, with spectacular results

From Page One

Five students from city drown at Mekedatu

Since it was afternoon, there were very few people present in the area. By the time help came, it was too late, a police officer said.

The fire and emergency services personnel reached the spot and after three hours of search operations, recovered the bodies. A senior police officer supervising the rescue operation said that the area was tricky with slippery rocks. It is difficult to walk on the rocks when water is there, he said.

There were security guards in the area and warning boards not to enter the water. However, the students entered the water. The police said the security arrangements will be reviewed to ensure such incidents do not occur in future.

BJP leader Srinivas Prasad passes away

Later, he joined the Congress and tasted his first electoral success when he contested from Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha constituency in 1980. Mr. Prasad, who had a love-hate relationship with the Congress, had stints with JD(U) and JD(S) besides the BJP.

After his victory in the Lok Sabha elections of 1999 from the JD(U), Mr. Prasad served as the Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government till 2004.

He joined the Congress later, got elected as an MLA from Nanjangud (reserved) Assembly constituency in 2013 and became the Minister for Revenue and Religious Endowment in the Congress government headed by Mr. Siddaramaiah.

But, Mr. Prasad resigned from the Assembly after he was dropped from the Cabinet in 2016. He joined the BJP and contested the bypolls held in 2017, but was defeated by the Congress.

Mr. Prasad, who had announced his retirement from electoral politics, stayed out of the 2018 Assembly elections, but was convinced by the BJP to return to the fray in Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha constituency in 2019. In a closely fought electoral battle, Mr. Prasad triumphed albeit by a slim margin. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had recently called on Prasad at the latter's residence in Mysuru, sparking speculations.

E-paper edition

The Hindu offers more coverage of Bengaluru in the e-paper edition. (epaper.thehindu.com)

In the issue dated April 30, we have a story on the 'unbilled' boards in the city. Urban planners and architects contend that this will aggravate the city's visual pollution, and that massive billboards are bound to hide several iconic buildings and other structures from public view.

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (April 30, Tuesday), the following articles are available:

- Chunk of India's forests 'missing' after 27-year-delay to file reports **bit.ly/unclassforestsexp**
- The physics and maths of keeping elections fair and representative **bit.ly/electionphysics**

PODCAST

- **Sisters** | Women Uninterrupted podcast - Episode 3 **newsth.live/RrukOo**

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access an article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

HC pulls up construction workers' welfare board

Daughters of two construction labourers had sought release of money from the Labour Welfare Fund to pay their college fees; their application was 'kept in cold storage' for 10 months

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has termed as "appalling" the conduct of the officials of the Karnataka Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board for "keeping in cold storage" for 10 months, the applications by daughters of two construction labourers seeking release of a meagre amount from the Labour Welfare Fund for their college fees as per the norms.

Workers at a construction site in Bengaluru. FILE PHOTO

'Unnecessary litigation'

"It is rather appalling that the officers fail to recognise the cup of woe of these poor families who make their living on a day-to-day basis. The amount sought would be far less than the travelling allowance or the dearness allowance that a person on the desk would earn, needed or not needed. The board ought not to have driven them to this unnecessary litigation, as the brunt of litigation cannot borne by the poor or the construction workers," the court observed.

Justice M. Nagaprasanna made these observation in his interim order while directing the board to release ₹30,000 and ₹35,000 respectively for the two petitioner-girls for pursuing their LLB and MBA courses along with a cost of ₹25,000 each of them, who have knocked the doors of the court along with their parents, who are construction labourers.

The petitioner-girls were entitled to ₹30,000 and ₹35,000 for LLB and MBA courses respectively as per a 2021 notification. However, the board has now stated that it would release only ₹10,000 and ₹11,000 respectively in terms of the new notification issued in 2023.

Disagreeing with the board's decision, the court said that the board cannot deny the higher financial assistance to them as per the norms existing when they had submitted their applications.

The petitioners are entitled for higher financial assistance as per the 2021 notification, as the petitioners are not at fault, the court said, while noticing that the board has ₹8,200 crore fund generated through collection of Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Cess.

750 tree branches along metro lines to be trimmed

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

This is not the first time BMRCL has decided to trim tree branches. FILE PHOTO

Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) plans to trim around 750 tree branches along two existing railway lines: the Purple Line from Whitefield to Challaghatta, and the Green Line from Nagasandra to Silk Institute, as part of its pre-monsoon safety drive.

These branches extend over viaducts, posing a risk of falling onto trains during the rainy season, prompting BMRCL to take action, according to officials. "Ahead of the monsoon, and considering the abundance of trees along the metro line, we've opted to trim branches that pose a risk of breaking during heavy rains. This proactive measure aims to prevent any branches from falling onto the viaducts below. This trimming will be conducted in a scientifically sound manner, ensuring the trees' health and safety," officials said.

This is not the first time BMRCL has decided to trim tree branches, and similar exercises have been conducted earlier to avoid tree branches falling onto the metro viaducts.

Officials explained that trimming the tree branches will require skilled cutters and a hydraulic crane weighing approximately 60 tonnes. A total of over 370 branches on the Purple Line and 380 branches on the Green Line are slated for trimming.

This task will be completed at a cost of ₹36 lakh, and through a bidding process, it will be assigned to the winning bidder. "The falling of tree branches usually results in damage to structures and disrupts signaling systems," added the official, emphasising the necessity of trimming the branches.

In 2018, a branch fell onto the electricity supply line between Lalbagh and Jayanagar stations, causing an outage and halting services for around 90 minutes.

Woman stabs daughter over 'neglecting studies'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 60-year-old woman stabbed her 19-year-old daughter to death during a fight that broke out between them at their house in Shastri Nagar in Banashankari on Monday.

The deceased has been identified as Sahithi, who also stabbed her mother with a knife before she collapsed and died on the spot. Neighbours hearing the commotion rushed to their help and shifted Padmaja to a hospital, where she is being treated in an Intensive Care Unit.

According to the police, Padmaja, who lost her husband two years ago, was not happy with Sahithi's academic performance in the II PU, and they used to fight over the issue.

Padmaja was critical of her daughter for neglecting studies. On Monday, heated arguments took an ugly turn, with Padmaja, in a fit of rage, stabbing Sahithi with a knife. Sahithi also pulled out the knife and stabbed Padmaja in defence before collapsing.

According to the police, Padmaja, who lost her husband two years ago, was not happy with Sahithi's academic performance in the II PU, and they used to fight over the issue.

A relative, identified as Nagesh, informed the police, who rushed to the spot and shifted the two to the hospital, where the doctor declared Sahithi as brought dead.

The Banashankari police are now awaiting Padmaja's recovery to question her to ascertain the reason behind the incident.

Man stabs wife

In another incident, a 38-year-old woman was stabbed to death by her husband over a domestic row in Kumaraswamy Layout on Monday.

The deceased has been identified as Shiyafathunnisa, while the accused, identified as Nasrulla, a welder by profession, is on the run. According to the police, the couple were married 20 years ago and have four children. Nasrulla used to have frequent fights with her suspecting her character. On Monday, following a fight, Nasrulla, in a fit of rage, stabbed her to death and escaped.

"We have some clues about Nasrulla and will be arrested soon," a police officer, said.

KEA publishes provisional answer keys to CET 2024

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

KEA is planning to announce the CET results by May-end.

The Karnataka Examination Authority (KEA) has published the provisional answer keys to Common Entrance Test 2024, which had turned controversial over several out-of-syllabus questions. Any objections to it should be submitted before May 7.

S. Ramya, Executive Director of KEA, said in a press release on Monday that provisional answers keys of Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology subjects of CET-2024 had been published on the KEA website http://kea.kar.nic.in for the information of the candidates.

"Objections, if any, to the published provisional answer keys, may be submitted only through the KEA portal by selecting the appropriate link on the KEA website with justification in PDF format from 11 a.m. on April 30 to 11 a.m. on May 7. While filing the objections, candidates should indicate the subject, version code, and question number. Objections without justification or without version code or question number will not be considered," according to the release.

Following the instructions by the Department of Higher Education, the KEA will exempt key answers for 50 out-of-syllabus questions including 11 in Biology, nine in Physics, 15 each in Mathematics and Chemistry, and it decided to mark 'X' in front of the questions.

The decision of the subject experts committee will be final in finalising the answer key, Ms. Ramya has clarified.

The KEA is planning to announce the KCET-2024 result by the end of May and preparations have already been made for the assessment of the answer sheets.

Amidst of all these developments, the KEA has submitted the report to the government on Monday, on the basis of the objections filed by the students, parents and educational institutions about the out of syllabus questions asked in the KCET-2024, which was conducted recently.

BWSSB finds 446 cases of unauthorised release of wastewater to UGDs, SWDs

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Stormwater drains are being choked owing to the release of sewage. FILE PHOTO

The Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) which is carrying out a drive against unauthorised release of wastewater to underground drainage has now found 446 illegal connection in 528 different buildings.

BWSSB Chairman V. Ram Prasath Manohar said of the 446 connections the BWSSB has started the process of legalising 221, levying fine to the violators. The board has also issued notices to 390 unauthorised connections. He said that sewage is being released to stormwater drains resulting in them being choked.

"I have directed officials to issue notices to violators who are releasing waste water to SWDs from May 1," he said.

He further said the BWSSB will give a window to regularise connections till May 7. The violators have to complete the process before the deadline. He said owing to the release of wastewater the UGD and SWDs are choked and during the rains, it may lead to flooding.

HC dismisses L&T's appeal against tender process for Sharavathi project

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has cleared the way for Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL) to continue its tender process for the ₹8,005 crore Sharavathi Pumped Storage and Hydroelectric project in Shivamogga and Uttara Kannada districts by dismissing an appeal filed a leading construction and infrastructure company.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice N.V. Anjaria and Justice Krishna S. Dixit passed the order while dismissing the appeal filed by M/s Larsen and Toubro (L&T) Ltd., Mumbai.

The company had challenged a March 6 judgement of a single judge, who had rejected its petition, in which the company had challenged the 21-day period provided for submitting bids for the mammoth project that required a detailed study before submission of bids instead of providing 90-120 days as per the rules.

KPCL had accepted the bid of M/s Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Ltd, Hyderabad, after the single judge's verdict and before the Division Bench passed an interim order on March 11 to maintain status quo on the tender process.

However, the Bench in its final verdict of April 25 has said that the "tender inviting authority is the best to judge as to what time should be prescribed in the tender conditions for submission of bids by the tenderers, depending upon the exigencies 54 of the tender work, though in all ordinary cases, it may abide by the time limit mentioned in Rule 17 of the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Rules, 2000."

"It could hardly be concluded that the time-period of 21 days given for submission of bids was unreasonably less to be preventive in nature," the Bench said, while noticing that other bidders participated were able to tender their bids within the stipulated time.

The Bench said that the appellant company perhaps wanted enlargement of time for its commercial consideration as it was unable to enter into an agreement with an electro-mechanical expert agency, as L&T specialises only in the civil works of the project, for submitting the bid.

"When any intending bidder puts forward its own term in disagreement with the term or condition in the tender, it will amount to conditional offer which is not permissible... Nor it is permissible for the intending bidder to dictate its own term to the Tender Inviting Authority," the Bench observed.

The manner in which L&T participated in tender process suggests that it acted as a fence-sitter as ultimately it did not submit the bid and kept itself away from participating in the tender, the Bench said while pointing out that the company had gathered information by visiting the site, went on to correspond with KPCL showing interest in the bid submission and giving its own suggestions about the conditions including the time-period for submission of the bid, besides showing that it had been negotiating with the expert partners for electro-mechanical part of the project.

Timings
BENGALURU

TUESDAY, APR. 30		
RISE	05:59	SET 18:34
RISE	00:00	SET 11:08
WEDNESDAY, MAY. 01		
RISE	05:59	SET 18:35
RISE	00:30	SET 12:08
THURSDAY, MAY. 02		
RISE	05:59	SET 18:35
RISE	01:20	SET 13:08

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	37	26
Mysuru	37	24
Bengaluru	38	23

Bengaluru Today
37°C Weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant Day will be very warm and humid with uneasy afternoon. Night also will be comfortable.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
36°C The weather will be dry. Day will be very warm with uneasy afternoon. Night will comfortable

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THE HINDU
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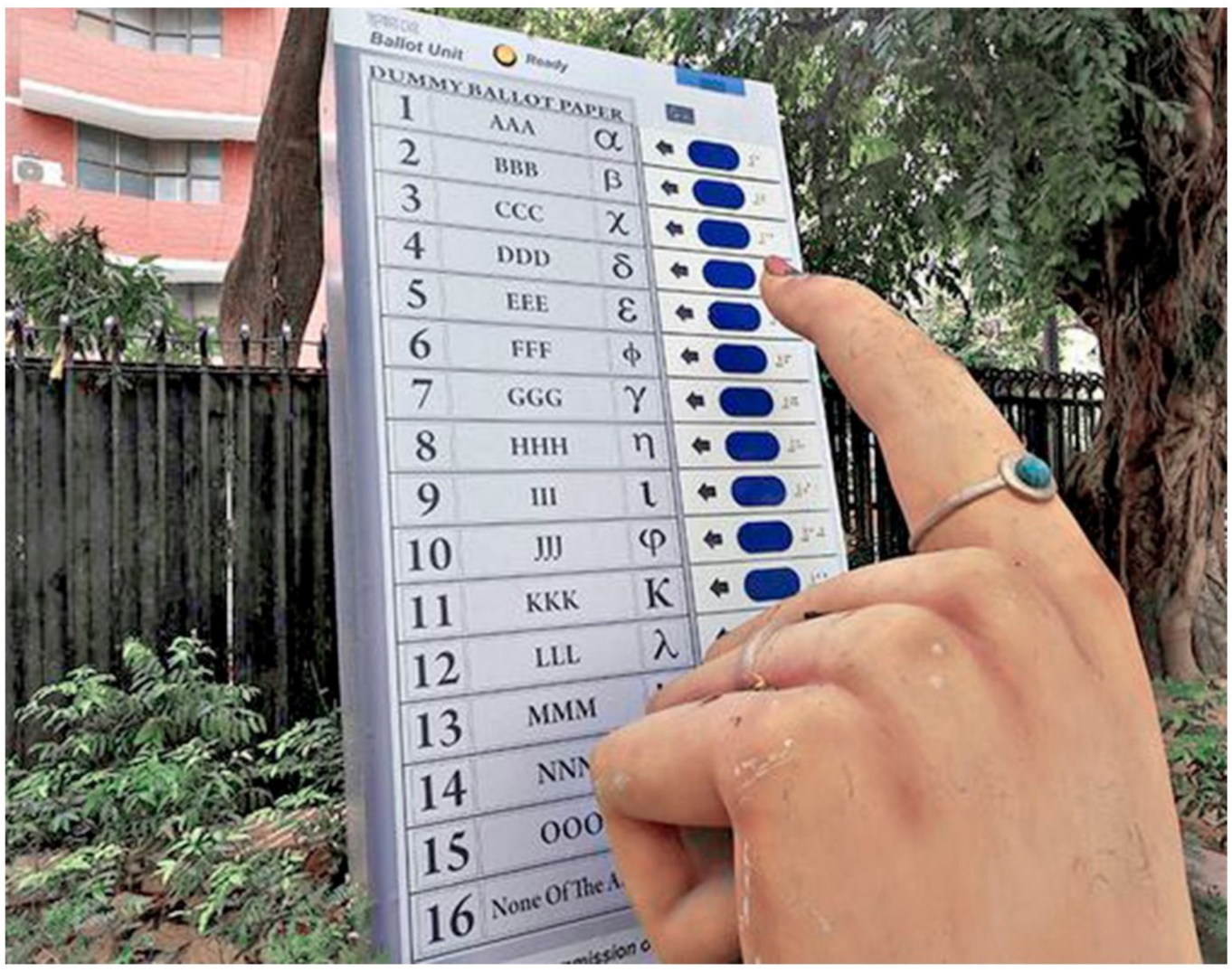
The physics and maths of keeping elections fair and representative

While mathematical analysis helps sharpen an algorithm for the election, a physics perspective can diagnose if it is fairly implemented in practice. The science of elections has a long way to go but for millions across the world, the elections of 2024 provide hope that the future is in their hands

M.S. Santhanam
Aanjaneya Kumar
Ritam Pal



The first-past-the-post system followed in India, the U.S., the U.K., and several other countries has many drawbacks. REUTERS

There are about 60 national elections in 2024 involving two billion people, including the biggest of them – the national elections underway in India – and the election to the U.S. presidency. Across the world, elections are a volatile mixture of emotions, aspirations, competing ideologies, and sometimes even violence. It might then surprise many that, despite the cacophony, there is science behind the election's processes.

About 2,500 years ago, the earliest form of elections in ancient Athens was a system that ultimately depended on the candidate's luck. Among all the suitable candidates, one was randomly chosen. Since the winning criterion was based on random choice, campaigning or influence couldn't help the candidate.

Tenth-century Chola inscriptions at Uthiramerur in Tamil Nadu reveal the practice of choosing village representatives through a 'Kudavolai' system. The final choice was made by randomly picking one among the candidates the people had voted for.

The 'first past the post' system?

Today, social choice theorists and mathematicians who study elections call this the approval voting system followed by a random choice. As a means of electing candidates, this process fails to reflect the will of the people. If this is a flawed process, what would be the right way to elect candidates? Surprisingly, mathematics tells us that there is no simple answer to this question.

The first-past-the-post (FPTP) system followed in India, the U.S., the U.K., and several other countries has many drawbacks. Critics have pointed out the disproportionate difference between the popular vote share and the seat share in many Parliaments. For example, in the 2015 Delhi Assembly elections, the Aam Aadmi Party received 54% of the popular vote but won 96% of the seats, whereas the Bharatiya Janata Party won 32% and 4%, respectively.

Second, winners in the FPTP system often secure far less than 50% of the vote share. No government in India, irrespective of its strength in the Lok Sabha (i.e. number of seats), has ever surpassed 50% vote share. Since 1918, only once, in 1931 in the U.K., did a government command more than 50%. So by the vote-share metric India and the U.K. were always ruled by "minority" governments. Expectedly, social choice theorists disfavour the FPTP system, though it continues to find wide use for its simplicity.

Condorcet and Borda systems

Are there better alternatives? Mathematical analysis to design better electoral systems dates back to the 13th century in the works of Ramon Llull, a missionary and theologian. His book *De Arte Eleccionis*, in the Catalan language, gives a detailed algorithm for a two-stage election process for church officials. It ensures that the winner, when pitted against each of the other contenders, receives more than 50% votes and is the most preferred candidate. This work was lost for centuries until it was discovered in the late 1980s.

Today, Llull's method is called the Condorcet system after the 18th-century French mathematician Nicolas de Condorcet, who rediscovered it in the 1780s. While better than FPTP, the Condorcet system can be difficult to understand and isn't used in any national election, not least because its mechanism allows participants to prevent the election of a particular candidate. Some smaller organisations use it to elect their leaders and board members, however.

The Borda electoral process, proposed by French mathematician Jean-Charles de Borda in 1784 – but first described by the 15th-century German astronomer Nicolas of Cusa – is a rank-based voting system (RVS) similar to the points table in sporting tournaments like the Indian Premier League.

It allows voters to rank each candidate on the ballot paper, and through a process of vote redistribution, the winner is guaranteed to have at least 50% of the vote.

Redistribution of votes can take several forms; the most common is to add the second and even third preference votes until one of the candidates crosses 50% vote share.

Are there problems with RVS?

The President of India is elected with the RVS system. In 1969, none of the 15 presidential candidates secured 50% of the first-preference votes. After adding second preference votes, V.V. Giri (who had 48% first preference votes) reached 50.8% and was declared the winner, defeating Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy.

Like Condorcet, the original Borda method is complex and challenging to implement in large elections such as those in India.

> Across the world, elections are a volatile mixture of emotions, aspirations, competing ideologies, and sometimes even violence. It might then surprise many that, despite the cacophony, there is science behind the election's processes

In 1951, the American economist and Nobel laureate Kenneth Arrow proved that RVS can conflict with certain fairness criteria required of elections. This doesn't imply such systems are unfair, even if occasionally the most popular candidate may fail to get elected.

Consider an RVS election with three candidates, A, B, and C, with nine voters ranking their preferences.

The results can read thus: four voters prefer B over C, and prefer A over both B and C. This information can be represented as A > B > C (4). Similarly, other voters may yield different combinations: B > C > A (3) and C > A > B (2). The distribution indicates A received the maximum number of first preference votes and C the least. Suppose B withdraws from the election. In a fair election, we should expect the result to remain unaffected – but this isn't the case with RVS.

Here, with the same vote distribution, the result will now read A > C (4 votes) and C > A (5 votes). So C has the most first preference votes now and wins. Arrow's theorem asserts that such outcomes are unavoidable in an RVS election.

How can maths, physics help?

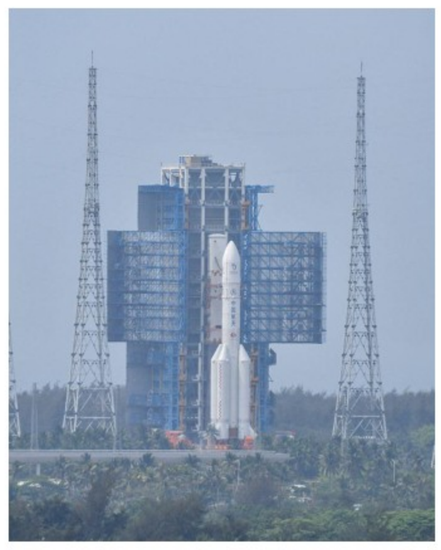
Ironically, while the cold rigour of mathematics sheds light on the inherently boisterous election processes, more grounded physics approaches draw on this lack of order to seek universal patterns irrespective of electoral systems. This is not unusual in physics.For example, inside a balloon, billions of molecules, moving randomly and bumping against one another, conspire together to produce a constant pressure that keeps the balloon puffed up.

This is the central lesson of statistical physics: order can emerge at the large scale even if dominated by disorder at smaller scales. Two decades of election data analysis has revealed emergent patterns in the form of the distributions of quantities that matter to an electoral process. Despite the superficial chaos surrounding the elections, these patterns are robust and independent of details, such as where elections were held, the voting paradigm or the cultural context.

Axiomatically, the absence of such order would suggest that elections are/were not fair and could be used to diagnose and flag electoral malpractices.

In short, while mathematical analysis helps sharpen an algorithm for the election process, a physics perspective serves to diagnose if the algorithm is fairly implemented in practice. The science of elections has a long way to go, but for millions of people across the world, the elections of 2024 provide hope that the future is in their hands.

(M.S. Santhanam is a professor of physics, and Aanjaneya Kumar and Ritam Pal are doctoral students, all at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune.)



The Chang'e 6 lunar probe and the Long March-5 Y8 carrier rocket combination at the launch pad at the Wenchang Space Launch Site in Hainan province, China on Saturday. REUTERS

China all set for launch of mission to far side of moon

Reuters

China will send a robotic spacecraft in the coming days on a round trip to the moon's far side in the first of three technically demanding missions that will pave the way for an inaugural Chinese crewed landing and a base on the lunar south pole.

Since the first Chang'e mission in 2007, China has made big leaps in its lunar exploration programme, narrowing the technological chasm with the U.S.

In 2020, China brought back samples from the moon's near side in the first sample retrieval in more than four decades, confirming for the first time it could safely return an uncrewed spacecraft to the earth from the lunar surface.

This week, China is expected to launch Chang'e-6 using the backup spacecraft from the 2020 mission, and collect soil and rocks from the side of the moon that permanently faces away from the earth.

With no direct line of sight with the earth, Chang'e-6 must rely on a recently deployed relay satellite orbiting the moon during its 53-day mission, including a never-before attempted ascent from the moon's "hidden" side on its return journey home.

China is expected to launch Chang'e-6 using the backup spacecraft from the 2020 mission, and collect soil and rocks from the side of the moon that faces away from the earth

The same relay satellite will support the uncrewed Chang'e-7 and 8 missions in 2026 and 2028, respectively, when China starts to explore the south pole for water and build a rudimentary outpost with Russia. China aims to put its astronauts on the moon by 2030.

Beijing's polar plans have worried NASA, whose administrator, Bill Nelson, has repeatedly warned that China would claim any water resources as its own. Beijing says it remains committed to cooperation with all nations on building a "shared" future.

On Chang'e-6, China will carry payloads from France, Italy, Sweden and Pakistan, and on Chang'e-7, payloads from Russia, Switzerland and Thailand.

NASA is banned by U.S. law from any collaboration, direct or indirect, with China. Under the separate NASA-led Artemis programme, U.S. astronauts will land near the south pole in 2026, the first humans on the moon since 1972.

Chang'e 6 will attempt to land on the northeastern side of the vast South Pole-Aitken Basin, the oldest known impact crater in the solar system.

The southernmost landing ever was carried out in February by IM-1, a joint mission between NASA and the Texas-based private firm Intuitive Machines.

The south pole has been described by scientists as the "golden belt" for lunar exploration.

Polar ice could sustain long-term research bases without relying on expensive resources transported from the earth. India's Chandrayaan-1 launched in 2008 confirmed the existence of ice inside polar craters.

Chang'e-6's sample return could also shed more light on the early evolution of the moon and the inner solar system.

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Please send in your answers to science@thehindu.co.in

Chemical weapons of the Vietnam War, which ended 49 years ago

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

During the war, U.S. forces used X, substances that, when applied to a plant, cause its leaves to fall off. The U.S. sprayed X *en masse* over forests to deprive North Vietnamese forces of foliage cover. What is X?

QUESTION 2

The most infamous example of X (from Q1) used during the war was called Y. It's a mixture of two compounds called 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D in a 1:1 ratio. After the war, more than a million people in Vietnam were estimated to have developed major illnesses due to exposure to Y. Name Y.

QUESTION 3

Britain was the first country to use X (from Q1) as a weapon of war, during the Malayan Emergency. It prepared a substance nearly identical to Y (from Q2) but in a way that also contained a toxin called Z. Z was the culprit in the Seveso disaster of 1976. Name Z.

QUESTION 4

Alongside Y (from Q2), the U.S. developed a mixture of cacodylic acid, sodium cacodylate, and water to destroy ____ plants. These plants were otherwise very difficult to destroy, even with fire. The mixture killed these plants by dehydrating them. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 5

The use of this substance has been banned against civilian populations since 1980, but its use affected civilians during the Vietnam War. Its effects were the subject of a famous photo taken in 1972 by Nick Ut. It burns, spreads easily, and sticks to surfaces. Name it.

Answers to April 25 quiz:

1. Value of a dodrant – **Ans: Three-fourths**
2. Name in Urdu for the number 1 followed by 11 zeroes – **Ans: Kharab**
3. Name in Tamil for the number 1 lakh lakh crore – **Ans: Anniyam**
4. Name for a number worth 10,000 – **Ans: Myriad**
5. Name of a quadrillion on the long scale – **Ans: Billiard**

Visual: **Clever Hans**

First contact: Brahanya Sankar | Rajmohan V. | Sahil Tukdi | Shiva Nigam | Muhammed Shahid

Visual: At a U.N. conference in June 1972, this man described the effects of X (from Q1) in Vietnam as "ecocide" and wanted it designated an international crime. Name him. PUBLIC DOMAIN

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

Prajwal case is a new blow to JD(S) and makes divide in family stark

Former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy has been trying to distance himself from the family of his elder brother H.D. Revanna who, along with his son, has been named in one of the complaints now being probed by SIT

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

For an embattled Janata Dal (Secular), which has been struggling to retain its identity and relevance in Karnataka politics, the alleged sex scandal involving its incumbent MP in Hassan Prajwal Revanna has come as a new blow.

It has not only embarrassed the party and the family of the party's patriarch, former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, but is also likely to strain relationships in the family that could trickle down in the party too.

Since Sunday, former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy has been trying to distance himself from the family of his elder brother H.D. Revanna who, along with his son, has been named in one of the complaints now being probed by the SIT.

While on Monday Mr. Revanna claimed that the whole episode was a sabotage aimed at tarnishing the image of the former Prime Minister's family, Mr. Kumaraswamy made no bones about distancing himself and his father from the scandal. "It is not about the family. We have been living separately and we do not have any common business. We participate together in political forums. What is the relationship of

Modi Government is the direct responsible behind BJP JDS party's candidate Prajwal Revanna fleeing abroad
Why the BJP remains silent? Obvious that anti-women
BJP leaders are the main reason for the amorous
Prajwal Revanna's absconding
Congress supporters protest against the BJP and the JD(S) for allegedly helping Prajwal Revanna leave the country. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT (ANOTHER PHOTO ON PAGE 8)

either me or my father with this?" he asked in Shivamogga.

Further, he appealed: "I want to clarify to the mothers and sisters not to suspect either me or my father (in this case). If found guilty, we will raise our voices on behalf of women seeking punishment to the accused."

Despite being the pan-Karnataka face of the JD(S), Mr. Kumaraswamy has avoided interfering in the party's affairs in Hassan as his elder brother is in full control in that area. It was only during the last Assembly elections that the friction between the families of Mr. Kumaraswamy and Mr. Revanna came out into the open over the selection of a candidate for Hassan Assembly constituency, when Bhavani Revanna, mother of Mr. Prajwal, insisted on contesting.

Hushed discussions

There had been a talk about the existence of sex videos allegedly involving the MP for nearly a year, and a BJP leader had made this public during a media conference. Mr. Prajwal had got an injunction order from a court to prevent media publications from airing or publishing the contents.

While Mr. Kumaraswamy on Monday claimed that the embarrassment could have been avoided had the family been aware of the videos, a source said: "The family knew about it, but did not know the magnitude of the scandal. During the discussion on giving ticket, Mr. Kumaraswamy had expressed reservations on re-nominating Mr. Prajwal, but he eventually ceded to the demands of his brother's family. This already had caused friction within the family."

The magnitude of the scandal and the absence of Mr. Prajwal, who left India soon after the polls on April 26, has provided limited scope for the party or its leaders to defend their MP. The party has so far not questioned the veracity of the contents.

Sources said that the scandal has brought huge embarrassment to the JD (S), and is very difficult to defend publicly.

"How do you defend this? This is the biggest scandal we have faced so far. It has damaged the party's image," another source said.

"The party is now weighing options for a strategy. On the other hand, the family is looking at legal options. If the SIT issues a notice to the MP, he will have to return, or else it would be another embarrassment to the party and the family."

'Act against protesters'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Janata Dal (Secular) has urged the Bengaluru Police Commissioner to take action against Congress workers who allegedly used abusive language against former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda and former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy during their protest seeking action against Prajwal Revanna, in Bengaluru.

In their memorandum, the party said that it had no issues with the protest, but the workers had used foul words to insult them.

More space objects were placed in orbit in 2023 compared to 2022

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

This computer-generated image released by the European Space Agency shows trackable objects in orbit around Earth. AFP

Indian Space Situational Assessment Report (ISSAR) for 2023 has revealed that more space objects were placed in orbit last year as compared to 2022.

The report, compiled by ISRO System for Safe and Sustainable Space Operations Management (IS4OM), was released in April by ISRO Chairman S. Somanath.

According to the report, the space object population continued to show a growing trend, indicative of better accessibility to space and the increasingly diverse applications of space technology in day-to-day life.

During 2023, more space objects were placed in orbit compared to the previous year.

A total of 3,143 objects originating from 212 launches and on-orbit break-up events were added to the space object population in 2023 compared to 2,533 objects from 179 launches in 2022.

There were five major on-orbit break-up events in 2023. Some of these fragments decayed within the same year, resulting in a net addition of 69 fragmented objects to the population of space debris by the end of 2023.

On the Indian scenario, a total of 21 satellites had re-entered the atmosphere till the end of 2023.

In 2023 alone, eight Indian satellites re-entered the atmosphere, among them Megha-tropiques-1 underwent controlled re-entry through an immensely challenging exercise.

According to the report, 82 rocket bodies from Indian launches were placed in orbit till 2023.

The upper stage of PSLV-C3 underwent an accidental break-up in 2001 and generated 371 debris. While most of these fragments have re-entered the atmosphere, 52 PSLV-C3 debris were still in orbit till the end of 2023.

Among the intact Indian upper stages, 35 rocket bodies re-entered the Earth's atmosphere till 2023-end, and five such re-entries took place in 2023.

The report said that ISRO regularly carries out analyses through IS4OM-ISTRAC to predict close approaches by other space objects to Indian space assets. In case of any critical close approach, collision avoidance manoeuvres (CAM) are carried out to safeguard the operational spacecraft. About 1,37,565 close approach alerts were received from USSPACECOM (US Space Command). These alerts were re-assessed using more accurate orbital data of the Indian operational satellites.

A total of 3,033 alerts for close approaches within a distance of 1 km were detected for ISRO satellites. Around 2,700 close approaches were observed with other operational satellites within 5 km of close approach distance.

On certain occasions, coordination was carried out with other international agencies, like SpaceX and EUMETSAT. However, none of the close approaches were critical enough to warrant a CAM.

In total, 23 CAMs were carried out during 2023 to protect Indian space assets compared to 21 in 2022 and 19 in 2021.

An increasing trend in CAMs per year is observed, which can be correlated with the growing congestion in outer space.

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Indian tourists who visited Singapore from January to March

2.45 in lakh. The city had received 2.9 lakh tourists during January-March 2019. The Singapore tourism board has focussed on family and film tourism to improve arrivals. PTI

Iraqi citizens repatriated from Syrian camp

700 Iraqis, predominantly women and children, linked to the Islamic State group arrived at a camp near Iraq's city of Mosul. Iraq announced they will undergo a rehabilitation program. AP

Arrests made as protests continue in U.S. campuses

275 These protestors were arrested on Saturday from Universities including, Indiana University, Arizona State University, and Washington University in St. Louis. AP

Volume of India's first commercial crude storage in the works

2.5 in million tonnes. Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd, an SPV created by the government, has invited bids for constructing 2.5 million tonnes of underground storage in Karnataka. PTI

Aid needed to alleviate El Nino dry spell in Zimbabwe

2 in billion dollars. Zimbabwe President Emmerson Mnangagwa declared the drought a national disaster. A dry spell induced by El Nino is wreaking havoc across southern Africa. AFP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Why are unclassed forests 'missing'?

What does the Forest (Conservation) Act Amendment (FCAA) 2023 mandate with respect to unclassed forests? What was the criticism against the amended Act? Have all States submitted their State Expert Committee reports as per the Supreme Court directives?

EXPLAINER

Prakriti Srivastava
Krithika Sampath
Prerna Singh Bindra

The story so far:
In compliance with a February 19, 2024, Supreme Court order, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) uploaded the various State Expert Committee (SEC) reports on its website earlier in April. This interim order was in response to a public interest litigation challenging the constitutionality of the Forest (Conservation) Act Amendment (FCAA) 2023. A key concern in the petition was that the status of unclassed forests, which were to be identified by the SEC reports, wasn't known or if they had been identified at all.

What does the FCAA stipulate?
With the enactment of FCAA, unclassed forests – which have legal protection under the landmark *T.N. Godavarman Thirumalpad* (1996) case – would lose this protection, leading to their inevitable diversion. The SEC reports were to be prepared in pursuance of the order, which specified that 'forests' as per their dictionary meaning and all categories of forests irrespective of ownership and notification status would be included under the ambit of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. As a result, unclassed forests, also known as deemed forests, would require the Central government's approval in case a project proponent sought to divert that land for non-forest use. Unclassed or deemed forests may belong to forests, revenue, railways and other government entities, community forests or those under private ownership, but are not notified.

Have these forests been identified?
The status of the reports were unknown from 1996 until they shot back into prominence when the MoEFCC told a Joint Parliamentary Committee that the SECs had identified unclassed forests that had been taken on record. This was in response to criticism that the proposed law undermined the *Godavarman* judgment and would exclude all unclassed forest land from its purview. The MoEFCC had assured the Committee that "the amended Act would be applicable" to the SEC-identified unclassed forests. However, in response to an RTI application filed on January 17, the MoEFCC said it "did not have the requisite reports".

Needs protection: Wild gaurs grazing in a forest area under Munnar wildlife division in Idukki. FILE PHOTO

While the MoEFCC has now uploaded the SEC reports on its website, they reveal a grim picture: no State has provided verifiable data on the identification, status, and location of unclassed forests. In fact, seven States and Union Territories – Goa, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal – appear not to have constituted the SEC at all. Twenty-three States have shared their reports but only 17 are in line with the Court's directives.

Many States have said the one month provided by the top court was too short and "the nature of work voluminous", and as a result haven't undertaken physical cadastral surveys nor demarcation of unclassed forest lands.

What do the reports say?
Only nine States have provided the extent of unclassed forests. Most states and UTs only shared the extent of different types of forest areas specified in the order: under government ownership, either with forest or revenue and in a few cases under other government departments.

Also, almost no State or UT specified the geographic locations of forests. Any identifying geographical information of forest land, where given, is only of reserve or protected forests, which isn't useful because this information is already available with Forest Departments. The SEC reports also question the veracity of the reports of the Forest Survey of India, the only government agency to survey and assess forests. For example Gujarat, whose SEC report says its unclassed forests cover 192.24 sq. km while the Survey has reported it as significantly higher at 4,577 sq. km (1995-1999).

The treatment of SECs without on-ground verification is likely to have resulted in the large-scale destruction of forests – which ought to have been identified, demarcated, and protected 27 years ago. But with no baseline data from 1996-1997, we have no idea how much unclassed forest has been lost. For example, Kerala's SEC didn't include the Pallivasal unreserve, an ecologically fragile area in Munnar; this area was also devastated during the 2018 floods.

What would be the effects of FCAA?
The loss of such forests is likely to be a recurring theme in all States, and needs to be investigated. It is also clear the reports were hastily put together, using incomplete and unverified data collected from readily available records, and submitted to the Supreme Court in order to fulfil their obligations.

The *Godavarman* order of the SC was to be implemented in letter and spirit. The failure to do this is a lost opportunity to achieve the requirements of the Indian Forest Policy, which envisages 33.3% forest cover in plains and 66.6% in the hills. Promulgating the FCAA without examining the SEC reports displays a lack of diligence on the MoEFCC's part and will have consequences for India's ecosystems and ecological security. Those responsible need to be held to account, and the national government needs to take ameliorative action to re-identify, retrieve, and protect forest areas as per the 1996 judgment.

Prakriti Srivastava is an IFS (retd.) officer who has served as DIG (wildlife) in the MoEFCC. Prerna Singh Bindra is former member, National Board for Wildlife. Krithika Sampath is a researcher from the University of Michigan.

THE GIST

- With the enactment of FCAA, unclassed forests — which have legal protection under the landmark *T.N. Godavarman Thirumalpad* (1996) case — would lose this protection, leading to their inevitable diversion.
- No State has provided verifiable data on the identification, status, and location of unclassed forests. In fact, seven States and Union Territories appear not to have constituted the SEC at all. Twenty-three States have shared their reports but only 17 are in line with the Court's directives.
- It is clear that the reports were hastily put together, using incomplete and unverified data collected from readily available records.

Why is Venice charging an entry fee for tourists?

How have local residents' associations responded to the move? Is overcrowding a significant issue in the city?

Atanu Biswas

The story so far:
On April 25, Venice, a city in Italy, to control overtourism, introduced an entry fee for visitors who are coming in to visit the city.

What is the Venice access fee?
Day-trippers coming to the city between 8.30 am and 4 pm are now required to pay €5. Overnight visitors are not charged, nor are residents, commuters, students, or children under 14. As part of a trial period, the entrance fee, which can be paid online and is only necessary to enter Venice's historic centre, is applicable on 29 peak days from April 25 to July 14. Transgressors risk fines ranging from €50 to €300.

What has been the response?
Some locals consider it a "joke," arguing that it could turn Venice into a 'theme park'. A number of residents' associations have protested, claiming that it is a political ploy that most likely won't stop tourists from visiting St. Mark's Square and the Rialto Bridge. On its first day, 5,500 individuals purchased tickets, bringing in €27,500, which may just be enough to cover operating costs.

It's a "first-of-its-kind experiment," according to Venice Mayor Luigi Brugnaro, to lessen overcrowding, promote longer stays, and enhance the quality of life for locals in one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. It's an effort to find a new equilibrium between residents and visitors. It would also aid in gathering basic data and controlling visitor flows. But some have also brought up privacy-related issues.

Is overcrowding an issue in Venice?
The introduction of the tourist tax comes after Venice just managed to avoid being included on UNESCO's danger list last year due to the harm that overtourism was causing to its fragile ecosystem. Due to mass tourism, Venice's main island, which was once the heart of a powerful maritime republic, has lost more than 1,20,000 residents since the early 1950s. The population shrank to fifty thousand. With 3.2 million overnight guests in the historic centre in 2022 and over 30 million day-trippers annually, the city experiences congestion when the number of day-trippers approaches 30,000-40,000. It is thought that day-trippers contribute very little to the local economy.

What about sustainability?
Venice has been making an effort to re-establish a more sustainable relationship with tourists. The insistence from UNESCO and other environmentalists' eventually forced the authority to forbid big cruise ships from passing through the Giudecca canal and past St. Mark's Square. A positive spillover effect of the Venice entry tax would be the reducing of the rapidly increasing number of unauthorised Airbnbs within the city. People operating illegal rentals will need to register legitimately (and pay tax) since anyone staying overnight will have to disclose where they are staying.

What about other popular spots?
Overtourism is a problem in many other European cities, including Amsterdam, Barcelona, and London. Tens of thousands of Spanish citizens recently protested in the Canary Islands, demanding a cap on the number of tourists allowed to visit the archipelago.

Seville's main Plaza de España also requires a fee to enter.

The small admission price might just be the beginning. The Italian town of Bagnoregio levied a fee on visitors in 2018 to collect funds for its rescue since portions of the town are collapsing and it was successful. The most visited place in Wales is the town of Portmeirion in north Wales, which is one of the few British towns which charges for admission.

Can India follow suit?
Similarly, India which is home to a large number of tourist spots can definitely earn a lot from tourism while simultaneously deterring insignificant revenue-generating tourists.

THE GIST

- Day-trippers coming to the city between 8.30 am and 4 pm are now required to pay €5. Overnight visitors are not charged.
- Overtourism is a problem in many other cities, including Amsterdam, Barcelona, and London.
- The introduction of the tourist tax comes after Venice just managed to avoid being included on UNESCO's danger list last year due to the harm that overtourism was causing to its fragile ecosystem.

Revanth Reddy terms polls 'fight between Gujarat and Karnataka'

Congress leader and Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy added another narrative to the many that are already at play in the poll campaign. At a public meeting at Sedam in Kalaburagi district on Monday, Mr. Reddy termed the elections as the "fight between Karnataka and Gujarat." "Prime Minister Narendra Modi is from Gujarat and the people there elected BJP candidates in all the 26 Lok Sabha constituencies. It is time for you, the people of Karnataka, to elect Congress candidates in at least 25 LS constituencies in this election to strengthen the hands of Mr. Kharge who heads the Congress as its president. Let us see whether BJP in Gujarat can win more seats in Gujarat than the seats Congress wins in Karnataka," Mr. Reddy said.

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy

'How will the State-Centre ties be when Modi is back?'

Criticising the Congress government in Karnataka for its comments on the Centre, former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy wondered how the State-Centre relationship would be when Narendra Modi returns as Prime Minister. Speaking to presspersons in Shivamogga on Monday, he said it was certain that Mr. Modi would be re-elected. "All these days, they tread the path of confrontation with the Centre. Initially, they [Congress] launched 'My tax, my right'. Later, they moved the court over drought relief. After the Centre released ₹3,454 crore for drought, the CM and others staged a protest against the Centre. I wonder what the State government will do after the polls?" Mr. Kumaraswamy remarked.

> Narendra Modi made no sincere effort to fulfil the objectives of the Constitution, and also acted against it for 10 years.
>
> **SIDDARAMAIAH**
> Chief Minister

Over 91% of those aged above 85, PwDs cast their votes from home

As many as 21,347 (91.96%) voters in the age group of 85+ have cast their votes from home out of 23,213 voters approved for home voting for May 7 poll in Karnataka, said EC. 10,282 (94.36%) PwD voters cast their votes from home out of 10,897 voters.

> The BJP has a large number of SC/ST and OBC MPs. This has affected the Congress that wants to focus on its favourite vote bank of Muslims.
>
> **NARENDRA MODI**
> Prime Minister

Repoll at Indiganatta village in Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha constituency was held under tight police security on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Repoll at Indiganatha peaceful, but turnout poor

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The repoll at Indiganatha village in Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha constituency on Monday was held under tight police security after the boycott call had turned violent on Friday leading to suspension of polling. The repoll was peaceful, but turnout poor.

Only 71 out of 528 voters cast their vote at booth 146, registering 13.45% polling. The local authorities on Sunday went around Indiganatha and Mendare villages informing people about the repoll and requesting them to vote.

The total number of voters at the booth was 528, including 279 men and 249 women, from Indiganatha and Mendare coming under Malai Mahadeshwara Gram Panchayat. Out of 71 who voted, 32 were men and 39 women.

Polling on Friday had to be suspended after clashes broke out with stones thrown at the voters at the booth, causing minor injuries to some women voters. The booth was ransacked and the EVM and poll material were damaged during the incident. Cases have been registered in M.M. Hills police station.

Most voters of Indiganatta stayed away from voting on Monday, barring 13 voters, as many of them abandoned their village after cases had been booked against them. Most of those who voted were from Mendare.

Raising infrastructure issues like roads and electrification, the poll boycott call was given but the voters of Mendare came to vote, triggering angry protests. The villages are located in the forest areas and most Mendare voters belong to the Soliga community.

Prajwal case has shocked nation: Alka Lamba

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

All India Mahila Congress president Alka Lamba on Monday said that Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, representing the JD(S), has "broken all crime records against the women in the country" and accused the BJP and JD(S) alliance of maintaining silence over the alleged sex scandal.

Speaking to reporters at the party office here, she claimed that the horrifying case of violence against women has shocked the nation. She alleged that party 'karyakartas' panchayat members, elderly women, women who came asking for help, and even maids have not been spared. "The horrible fact is that the acts of the sexual predator was endorsed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he campaigned in the Old Mysore region," she alleged.

KPCC spokesperson Ramesh Babu too alleged that the sexual exploitation by the JD(S) leader was a blackspot on the culture of the State and politics. Speaker Om Birla, who suspended more than a hundred MPs, should suspend Prajwal, he said. Meanwhile, the Congress workers staged a protest condemning the incident.

How did PM let a 'criminal' escape from right under his nose? asks Priyanka

Modi, who keeps track of the movements of every leader in the country, is mysteriously silent on the 'sex crimes' case, says the Congress general secretary at a rally in Kalaburagi district

The Hindu Bureau
KALABURAGI

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Monday questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi on how a "rakshas" could be allowed to leave the country, referring to alleged sexual crimes involving incumbent Hassan MP and JD(S) leader Prajwal Revanna, who has reportedly left the country before the Special Investigation Team began investigation into the allegations.

Addressing a public rally, along with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, at Sedam in Kalaburagi district, she said that Mr. Modi, "who keeps track of the movements of every leader in the country" was mysteriously silent when the "criminal who left the country was right under his nose."

"They come to know wherever the Opposition leaders go. However, they did not know when a criminal left the country after committing such heinous crimes on hundreds of women. How can we believe it? You, my sisters, must continue to question Mr. Modi so that he would never dare to speak on women's mangalsutra again," she said, without taking the name of Prajwal.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi addressing an election rally at Sedam in Kalaburagi district on Monday.

At a rally in Aligarh earlier, the Prime Minister had said: "They [Congress] plan to amend the law to snatch gold, including their mangalsutra from our mothers and sisters. They are bent upon stealing it."

Hathras and Unnao

Speaking at Sedam, Ms. Vadra questioned where Mr. Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah were when the country's Olympic medallists were sexually assaulted and girls were raped in Hathras and Unnao. "I would like to ask Mr. Modi which side he took when women were raped in Hathras and Unnao. I would like to ask him whether he and his government stood with the victims or rapists. In Karnataka, Mr. Modi shared dais with a criminal who harassed thousands of women and sought vote for him. I would like to ask Mr. Modi what he would say about it," she said.

She appealed to people to make the Prime Minister accountable and answerable to them. "You must ask him to talk about your real issues. What is told to you or shown on television is not true. Your life is your reality... Install a new dispensation which is accountable and answerable to you," she said.

General secretary Randeep Surjewala, Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Ministers Priyank Kharge and Sharan Prakash Patil, and other party leaders were present.

Cong. making money by running water tanker mafia in Bengaluru: Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being felicitated by BJP leaders at a public meeting in Bagalkot on Monday. ANI

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Training guns on alleged corruption in the Congress government in Karnataka, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the Siddaramaiah-led government had turned the tech hub into "tanker hub".

"Forget about other things, the Congress leaders are making money by running water tanker mafia in Bengaluru,' he said at an election rally in Bagalkot on Monday. Rampant corruption by the Congress had "pushed Karnataka to the brink of bankruptcy," he said.

"In a short time, the Congress government has emptied the exchequer. Very soon, they will have no money to pay government employees," Mr. Modi said. He contended that while "the BJP has used social media for many good things including delivering its agenda" the Congress was using Artificial Intelligence (AI) "to spread fake news." "They are making fake videos using my voice. In U.P., they used Amitabh Bachchan's voice to spread fake news. This is unfair," he said.

He said that the BJP NDA government had tried to take up more development works in 10 years, than the Congress could do in 60 years. "The Modi sarkar has given priority to infrastructure development, including construction of roads, railways, airports and seaports. Hi-tech trains have run between small towns in Karnataka. Cities like Vijayapura have got airports," he said.

Political greenhorn with family legacy is taking on MP who is attempting a hat-trick

Praveen B. Para
KALABURAGI

Union Minister of State for Fertilizers and Chemicals Bhagwanth Khuba, who entered the Lok Sabha in 2014 with a giant-killer tag defeating the former Chief Minister late N. Dharam Singh with a comfortable margin of 92,222 votes, is facing a litmus test this time. He has to face a tough fight from an incumbent Minister's son on the one hand, and a section of disgruntled leaders from his own party on the other, in Bidar parliamentary constituency.

Mr. Khuba, who was a surprise selection against Congress strongman Mr. Singh in 2014, is facing 26-year-old Congress candidate Sagar Khandre, who is also a surprise choice of the party without any experience of fighting an election.

However, Mr. Khandre has political legacy on his side. His grandfather, Bheemanna Khandre, is a former Minister and a senior Veerashaiva leader, while his father, Eshwar Khandre, is now Forest and Environment Minister. One of his uncles, Vijayakumar Khandre, was two-time MLA. His other uncle, Prakash Khandre, was also two-time MLA representing the BJP.

Mr. Khuba's campaign for his third contest for Bidar Lok Sabha seat began on the wrong foot with BJP strongman and Banjara community leader in Bidar district and former Minister Prabhu Chavan openly campaigning against him. Some other senior party leaders, including Eshwar Singh Thakur, who was an aspirant for the Bidar Lok Sabha seat this time, is keeping a low profile in the party campaign.

Even the Janata Dal (Secular) leaders, who have an alliance with the BJP in the State, have so far kept a low profile and interestingly senior JD(S) leader and former Minister Bandeppa Kashempur has kept himself away from the campaign, giving anxious moments for Mr. Khuba since Mr. Kashempur wields considerable influence in some pockets of the district, including Bidar South Assembly constituency, which returned him to Assembly for three times.

Compared to the two previous polls, the path appears to be jotted with many hurdles for Mr. Khuba. In the last two elections, it was "Modi wave" that enabled him to emerge victorious, but the incumbent MP is indeed on a sticky wicket this time.

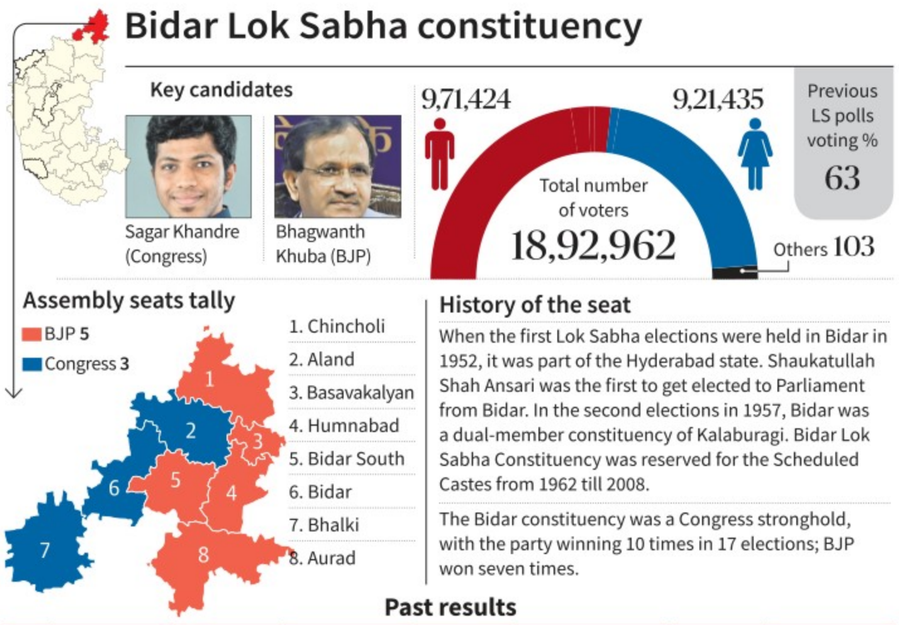
His alleged failure as an MP and as a Minister in the Union Cabinet to fulfil the aspirations of the people of the backward Bidar district to bring any projects and his failure to retain a mega helicopter manufacturing factory, which was sanctioned to Bidar when Dharam Singh was the MP in the UPA government is not being taken kindly by the voters of the district. The unit was shifted to Tumakuru district, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2023.

Another factor which has made the BJP campaign managers spend sleepless nights is the presence of influential Maratha leader Dinakar More, a popular pediatrician from Kalaburagi in the fray as an Independent candidate. The Maratha community has a considerable number of votes in the constituency and a majority chunk of the Maratha voters are traditional BJP voters. Dr. More, who is the Kalaburagi district president of the Maratha community, is proving to be a thorn in the flesh of BJP candidates.

According to a rough estimate, Marathas constitute around 1.35 lakh voters here. Another factor which is working against the BJP chances is the large presence of Muslim votes that roughly constitute around 22%. As there is no Muslim candidates in the fray, the Congress is hoping to grab the community votes entirely. Lingayats constitute around 19% of the voters in the constituency, and with both contestants from the community, votes may be divided. Though Lingayats are seen as traditional BJP voters, the Khandre family here stakes greater claim to Lingayat leadership.

Mr. Sagar and his party leaders are banking on the five guarantee schemes implemented by the Congress government, while Mr. Khuba is asking voters to elect him to make Mr. Modi the PM for the third time.

Bidar Lok Sabha constituency


Key candidates
Sagar Khandre (Congress)
Bhagwanth Khuba (BJP)
9,71,424
9,21,435
Total number of voters
18,92,962
Others 103
Previous LS polls voting %
63
Assembly seats tally
BJP 5
Congress 3
1. Chincholi
2. Aland
3. Basavakalyan
4. Humnabad
5. Bidar South
6. Bidar
7. Bhalki
8. Aurad
History of the seat
When the first Lok Sabha elections were held in Bidar in 1952, it was part of the Hyderabad state. Shaukatullah Shah Ansari was the first to get elected to Parliament from Bidar. In the second elections in 1957, Bidar was a dual-member constituency of Kalaburagi. Bidar Lok Sabha Constituency was reserved for the Scheduled Castes from 1962 till 2008.
The Bidar constituency was a Congress stronghold, with the party winning 10 times in 17 elections; BJP won seven times.

Past results

	Winner	Votes vote share	Runner-up	Votes vote share	Third place	Votes vote share	BJP+JD(S) votes-vote share
2014	Bhagwanth Khuba (BJP)	4,59,290 **47.68%**	N.Dharam Singh (Cong.)	3,67,068 **38.11%**	Bandeppa Kashempur (JDS)	58,728 6.10%	5,18,018 **53.99%**
2019	Bhagwanth Khuba (BJP)	5,85,471 **52.36%**	Eshwar B. Khandre (Cong.)	4,68,637 **41.91%**	Baba Bukhari (BSP)	15,188 **1.36%**	JD(S) supported Congress

Modi not seeking votes on merits of his govt: Lad

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

Labour Minister Santosh Lad, referring to election speeches of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said on Monday that nowhere was he seeking votes citing the merits of his 10-year governance.

"He is only engaged in criticising the Congress. Let him criticise, but at the same time, he should speak about the merits of his government, on which the people can vote," he opined, speaking to presspersons in Shivamogga on Monday. In the last 10 years, during Mr. Modi's rule, Mr. Lad said there was zero expenditure on science, technology, and research. "This is as per the Niti Aayog report. Besides that, the country has become the second-biggest exporter of beef," he said.

On electoral bonds

Referring to the issue of electoral bonds, Mr. Lad said that only a person of Vishwaguru fame could commit such a "fraud". "He brought in the law with the purpose of hiding the identity of the donors. However, after the Supreme Court termed it unconstitutional, the PM changed his version to claim that because of his law, the details of the donors came out. How can you counter such arguments?" he wondered.

KEYWORD

GETTY IMAGES

The paradox of thrift: does a rise in savings cause a fall in investment?

Keynesian economists argue that a rise in individuals' savings, by reducing the amount of money that is spent on final goods and services, can in effect cause a significant fall in overall savings and investment

Prashanth Perumal

The paradox of savings, also known as the paradox of thrift, refers to the theory that a rise in the savings rate of individuals can surprisingly cause a fall rather than a rise in the overall savings in an economy. This is in contrast to the general belief that a rise in individuals' savings rates will cause a rise in the overall savings in the economy. So even though savings may be good for an individual household, it is believed that it may not be good for the wider economy. The idea is part of the under-consumption theories of the business cycle which attribute economic downturns to weak consumption and high savings.

Origins of the theory

The concept was popularised by British economist John Maynard Keynes in his 1936 book *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money*. Prior to Keynes, it was discussed by economists William T. Foster and Waddill Catchings in works such as *Business without a Buyer* and *The Dilemma of Thrift*.

Keynesian economists believe that higher savings is bad for the wider economy, and that boosting consumer spending is the way to grow an economy. They argue that savings are invested by capitalists with the ultimate aim of selling their output in the form of final goods and services to consumers. So, if consumers fail to spend enough money on the output that capitalists bring to the market to sell, it can cause losses to capitalists and discourage further investment. On the other hand, a rise in consumer demand for final goods and services is expected to encourage people to save more and invest.

So, Keynesian economists argue that a rise in individuals' savings, by reducing the amount of money that is spent on final goods and services, can in effect cause a significant fall in overall savings and investment. In fact, many economists today believe that fluctuations in consumer spending are the primary reason behind the business cycle. They recommend that the government should take various measures, including increasing government spending, to put more money in the hands of consumers during economic downturns. Basically, in the Keynesian view of the economy, the primary challenge that fiscal and monetary authorities need to solve is how to get people to spend enough money on final goods and services to justify the costs that capitalists incur to produce these goods and services.

Criticisms of the idea

Critics of the idea argue that saving more is not bad for the economy and that a fall in consumer spending does not actually cause a fall in investment. In fact, they argue that a fall in consumer spending leads to a rise in savings and investment. This is simply because any money that people don't spend on consumer goods or hoard under their beds has to go towards their savings, which in turn gets invested.

A rise in savings, they further note, causes an increase in entrepreneurial demand from capitalists for various factors of production. So, lower consumer demand for final goods and services gets offset by higher demand for factors of production, and hence there is no drop in aggregate demand in the economy as a result of higher savings.

Secondly, critics argue that it is not really true that a drop in consumer spending will lead to a drop in investment owing to a lack in consumer demand for the final goods and services produced by businesses. Instead, they argue, a drop in consumer spending will simply cause a change in the way capitalists allocate their savings across time. In other words, these economists note that there won't be any adverse consequences due to lower consumer spending.

When people spend less on consumer goods and save more, they note, this will cause capitalists to invest a greater amount of available savings to satisfy consumer demand in the more distant future. So, longer-term business projects which were earlier unviable due to people's preference to consume goods and services in the near future rather than in the distant future suddenly become viable.

Now, the greater time allowed for capitalists to bring finished products to the market is a major reason why economic output is much higher in an advanced economy, these economists point out.

Put another way, the critics argue that capitalists in a free economy will effectively reallocate higher savings in accordance with the greater preference that consumers show for goods in the distant future than in the near future.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

A quiz on all things jazz on the occasion of International Jazz Day celebrated on April 30

V.V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1
Which famous American jazz musician and composer mooted the idea of having an International Jazz Day and when was it first observed?

QUESTION 2
Which African city is the Global Host for 2024 and will anchor International Jazz Day programmes around the world?

QUESTION 3
Characterised by heavy mode modulation and few chord changes, which type of jazz had its pioneers in Miles Davis and John Coltrane?

QUESTION 4
Bird, the 1988 biographical film directed and produced by Clint Eastwood, is about which famous jazz musician?

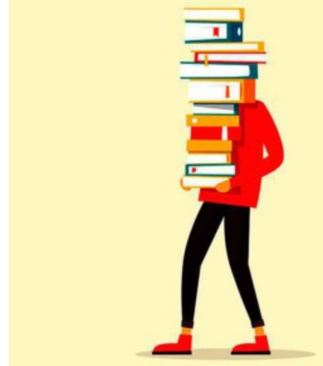
QUESTION 5
What is the claim to fame of 'Livery Stable Blues' released in February 1917?

QUESTION 6
Which acclaimed jazz musicians were nicknamed 'High Priest of Bop' and 'King of the Clarinet'?

QUESTION 7
Whose autobiography is titled *Lady Sings the Blues* that was adapted into a movie in 1972, starring Diana Ross?

Visual question:
Identify this legendary singer dubbed the 'the Lady of Swing' and also famous for improvised scat solos. AP

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. This country has won the Thomas Cup the most number of times. **Ans: Indonesia**
2. The only European/non-Asian country to have won the Thomas Cup. **Ans: Denmark**
3. India hosted the Cup only once here. **Ans: In 2014 in New Delhi**
4. This country has won the Uber Cup the most number of times. **Ans: China**
5. The only non-Asian country to have won the Uber Cup so far. **Ans: The U.S.**
6. The number of times India has qualified for the semi-finals in the Uber Cup. **Ans: Three times**
Visual: Identify this Indian athlete. **Ans: K. Srikanth**
Early Birds: Varghese Joseph| Saheni George| Sadhan Kumar Panda| M. Suresh Kumar| Abhay Krishan



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subramanian

"In limbo (Dr. K. V. K. Veereswaran, Dindigul)."

" 'In limbo' is an idiom which means 'in an intermediate or uncertain state; neglected.'

The proposal has been in limbo for several years.

According to early Christian theology, good people born before Christ and unbaptised children born after Christ were sent after their death to the border of Hell called Limbo. Their souls, it was believed, would reach Heaven during the second coming of Christ."

"Umbrella organisation (G. Chandramouli, Mysore)."

" 'Umbrella organisation' is 'a controlling agency for a group of related companies, groups, projects, etc.' UNESCO is an umbrella organistion."

"Familiar with, familiar to (Sabir Kr. Dey, Basudevpur, West Bengal)."

" 'Familiar with' means 'knowing a thing well or in detail'.

I am familiar with this subject.

I am not familiar with this route.

'Familiar to' means 'well known.'

This area must be familiar to you.

'Familiar with' also means 'friendly and informal.'

I am on familiar terms with him."

"Latitudinarian (T. R. R. Iyengar, Madurai)."

"One of the meanings of latitude is 'freedom to do, say, etc. what one likes.' A latitudinarian is one who allows latitude, especially in religion. He pays little attention to dogma and orthodoxy.

Orthodox people dislike him as he is a latitudinarian."

"Samey (K. Puranik, Bombay)."

" 'Samey' means 'lacking in variety, monotonous, dull.' This is a colloquial word. It is from 'same'.

His paintings are samey. I don't like them.

Her plays are samey."

"Steal as a noun (Girija Joshi, Varanasi)."

"Steal is used as a noun in colloquial American English. It has two meanings. One is 'an act or instance of stealing or theft'. The other is 'an expectedly easy task or bargain'.

At ₹200, this camera is a steal."

"Not do a hand's turn (K. Sasidaran, Kozhikode)."

" 'Not do a hand's turn' means 'not do any work.'

He does not do a hand's turn at home. He just eats and sleeps."

"Evident, obvious (P. D. Moorthy, Madras)."

"Both mean 'clear, plain'. You say that something is evident when it can be inferred from indications.

It is evident that he has stolen them.

'Obvious' is from Latin 'obvium' which means 'on the road.' What is on the road is unmistakably clear.

It is obvious that he is the thief.

Evident means 'plain,' 'obvious' means 'unmistakably plain.'

Published in The Hindu on October 22, 1991.

Word of the day

Hardscrabble:
barely satisfying a lower standard

Synonyms: scrimpy, stingy, meagre

Usage: *He lived a hardscrabble life.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/hardscrabblepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /hɑɹdˌskɹæbəl/

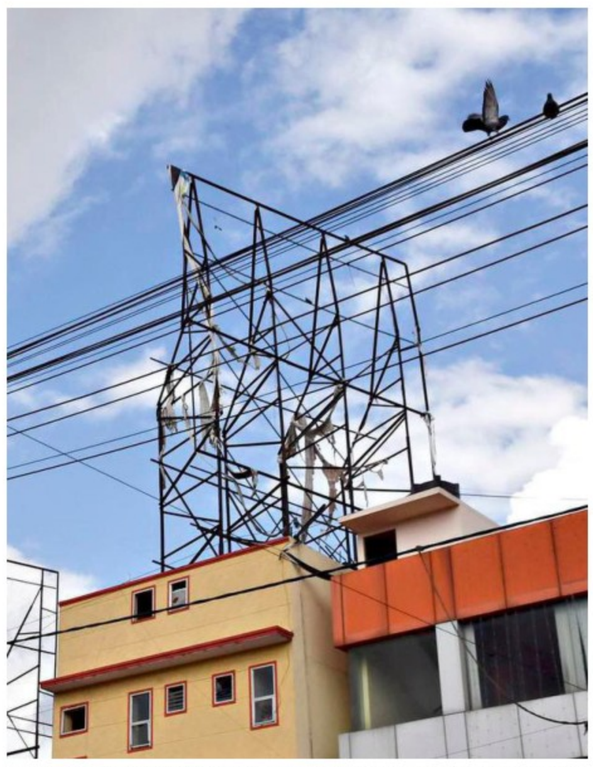
For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Hoardings set to return, but BBMP should first tax the 'unbilled' boards

The BBMP budget has proposed to generate ₹500 crore annually from the hoardings that will come up once the new byelaws are green-signalled by the government

Rasheed Kappan
BENGALURU

A banner in Bengaluru being removed before the Lok Sabha elections. BHAGYA PTAKASH K.



Many dub these billboard as con-jobs and surrogate ads installed by a well-entrenched advertisement mafia.

Giant outdoor advertisement hoardings had once dominated Bengaluru's skyline. But the exposê of a massive ₹2,000 crore scam linked to illegal hoardings eventually led to a ban. Blatant violations followed. Is the time ripe enough now to bring them back with a new advertisement byelaw drafted by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) awaiting a final go-ahead from the State?

The Palike plan, as articulated in its BBMP Advertisement Bye Laws 2023, is this: Licences are to be auctioned to outdoor advertising firms to erect paid advertisement hoardings / billboards but only in private properties.

The ban on commercial advertisements will continue on roads with width less than 60ft. But this regulation will not apply to roads in commercial and industrial zones.

In 2018, the BBMP Outdoor Advertisement and Public Message Byelaws prohibited all commercial ads except those under public-private partnerships. This followed an internal report by the then Palike Assistant Commissioner (advertisements) K Mathai who pegged the revenue losses from illegal billboards at ₹2,000 crore.

The Outdoor Advertising Association, Bengaluru, approached the High Court challenging the byelaws and obtained a favourable order. The Court directed the BBMP to allow outdoor ads on private properties with restrictions.

Generous byelaws

What has raised eyebrows, however, is the generosity of the new byelaws. Depending on the road width, the area of the paid advertisement could vary from a minimum of 800 sqft to a maximum of 3,000 sqft with a height restriction of 75ft. Advertisers could display such billboards every 100m of the permitted road stretch. This is a far cry from 2018, when only 800 sqft hoardings were allowed within the city limits.

Urban planners and architects contend that this will aggravate the city's visual pollution. Massive billboards at traffic intersections, for instance, are bound to hide several iconic buildings and other structures from public view. "We have a precedent. Chennai and Delhi have banned them," notes urban architect Naresh Narasimhan.

"You can have them outside the city centre. In Bengaluru itself, outside the Outer Ring Road, immediately after the Hebbal flyover you have an overdose of hoardings. But within the city, it amounts to visual pollution, covering up all the greenery and signs of the city. It is an outdated concept, no western city allows it," he points out.

A revenue generator

But the BBMP is unlikely to go by this argument. The BBMP budget has proposed to generate ₹500 crore annually from the hoardings that will come up once the new byelaws are green-signalled by the government. This is to be used for Brand Bengaluru works.

The budget statement talked about the new policy as a rational, transparent and regulated system of commercial and self-advertisements, drafted on the lines of the Supreme Court approved advertisement policy of the New Delhi Municipal Corporation. The Palike is convinced this will safeguard the city's aesthetics and the visual spaces.

A billboard being vandalised by Karnataka Rakshana Vedike activists. FILE PHOTO

Ad mafia

However, past experience shows the BBMP has a big problem with enforcement. As Chairman of BBMP Town Planning Committee, former Mayor and MLC, P.R. Ramesh recalls how he dealt with the menace in 2004: "There was a mafia behind poll ads. They would take permission for 100 ads, but install 300 to 400, even on footpaths obstructing pedestrians. There were many deaths too. We totally stopped the ads despite heavy pressure."

Responding to a petition, the High Court had in January directed the State and BBMP to deposit ₹50 each for every illegal hoarding in the city.

The Court sought an action taken report from the Palike on the illegal billboards.

Ramesh notes that even if BBMP promptly taxed the existing ones, that itself would yield a substantial revenue. "When I was Mayor, the agencies had not paid up. We started defacing the hoardings with spray paint. They voluntarily queued up, and paid about ₹30 crore. We need to take such measures. Byelaws are fine, but they have to implement it. It is very important to raise revenues," he explains.

Technology could be the answer to track the menace of illegal hoardings, suggests urbanist V Ravichander, who was a member of BBMP's restructuring committee. "Today, technology allows the use of holograms, equivalent to a QR code that can be scanned from ground level to check if the hoarding is legitimate or not. Let the Palike generate a code each time a hoarding is permitted so that it is unique to that billboard. It carries the history of that hoarding, the start and end dates," he explains.

Proxy skywalk ads

Since a lot of hoardings spring up on private property, it makes sense for the BBMP to see the authorised ones as an incremental revenue source, says Ravichander. "A higher flat rate can be charged. The licence can be based on the location, density of traffic, low, medium or high. The flat rate could be higher if the traffic density is higher." To work around the ban, advertisers in collusion with Palike insiders have been accused of erecting skywalks across the city. Massive billboards cover most of these structures, a clear sign that they were originally designed for advertisements and not pedestrians. Most skywalks are unused by walkers who prefer to cross roads at ground level.

Many dub these billboard skywalks as con-jobs and surrogate ads installed by a well-entrenched advertisement mafia. Ravichander agrees, and suggests a way to levy a hefty price: "Since these skywalks have come up for advertisements, they should be levied high traffic / high density rates by default. None of the skywalks should be in the low or medium category, but in the highest rate bracket," he elaborates.

Metro pillar ads: Share revenue

The new byelaw permits paid ads on Metro pillars in a move aimed at helping the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation (BMRCL) raise non-fare revenue. Ramesh insists that since the land belonged to the Palike, BBMP should get a share of the revenue or rent. "While tax revenue from advertisers is one source, this too is a mode of income for the Palike," he explains.

The High Court has reiterated that it is not in favour of a complete ban on hoardings. Ramesh says the byelaws are fine, but should be implemented only after a broad discussion that deliberates on public safety and revenue share. What about urban aesthetics and visual pollution? Can a balance be struck?

Third Annual Climate Asia Conference highlights diverse perspectives on climate action

From access to sign language interpreters to serving organically sourced cuisine, the conference introduced innovative initiatives

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Climate Asia Annual Conference 2024
Accelerating Climate Action: Bridging the Gap from Dialogue to Action
19th & 20th April 2024
9:30 AM - 5:30 PM
S.D Auditorium, Indian Institute of Science

A panel discussion during the third Annual Climate Asia Conference.

Themed "Accelerating Climate Action: Bridging the Gap from Dialogue to Action," the third Annual Climate Asia Conference that took place in the city recently, saw leaders and experts from diverse sectors speaking on our planet's pressing challenges. Spread across two days, participants engaged in thought-provoking discussions spanning critical topics, including the feminist perspective on climate, mental health, capacity building in agriculture and many more. From access to sign language interpreters to serving organically sourced cuisine, the conference introduced innovative initiatives.

Feminist perspective

The opening panel, 'Climate Action is at Crossroads: Why Does it Need a Feminist Approach,' highlighted the urgent need for a feminist perspective in climate discourse. The panel featured insights from leaders such as Anjalli Ravi Kumar of Zomato Limited, Neha Saigal from Asar Social Impact Advisors, Uthara Narayanan of Buzz Women, and Aiswarya Ananthapadmanabhan of EquiLead, Climate Asia. They collectively underscored the disproportionate effects of climate change on women and marginalized groups and the necessity of including these communities in decision-making processes.

The second panel, 'Climate Change and Mental Health in Marginalised Communities,' co-hosted by Mariwala Health Initiative had speakers like Pranav Sethi from Geohazards Society, Ishwar Singh from Ek Potlee Ret Ki, Kalki Subramaniam from Sahodari Foundation, and Ruby Hembrom from Adivaani, revealed how climate change deeply affects marginalized groups, showing how lack of readiness, economic gaps, and exclusion compound their vulnerabilities.

The panel on 'Bridging Climate Science and Action: The Essential Role of Capacity Building in Climate Adaptation,' co-hosted by the Center for Study of Science, Technology, and Policy, focused on the urgent capacity-building needs among India's small and marginal farmers. The speakers for this panel were Pramel Kumar Gupta from the National Coalition for Natural Farming, Dr. Indu K Murthy from CSTEP, and Koushik Yanamandram from Climate Asia. Pramel Kumar Gupta, said, "In India, 86% of the 15 crore farmers are small or marginal, and half of these farm mainly for their own consumption. This highlights the urgent need for CSOs to help bridge the gaps in livelihood and consumption."

Green Skills

Day two kicked off with the panel 'Empowering the Green Workforce: Cultivating Sustainable Skills for Impact,' co-hosted by EY Global Delivery Services. The discussion, featuring Rumi Mallick Mitra from EY GDS, Dr. Mukund Raj from NABARD Consultancy Services, Dr. Gayathri Vasudevan from Sambhav Foundation & Labour Net, and Satyam Vyas from Climate Asia, highlighted the essential role of green skills in today's job market.

They emphasized reskilling through technology, sustainable practices for organizations, and the support of climate finance like green bonds. Satyam Vyas underlined the integration of climate awareness in every role.

The panel 'Scaling Up Climate-Smart Agriculture in India: Opportunities for Entrepreneurs across the Value Chain,' co-hosted by NSRCEL, featured insights from Archana Stalin of myHarvest Farms, Binu Cherian from HarvestPlus, Abhilash Sethi from Omnivore, and Vijaylaxmi Patil from NSRCEL.

They explored sustainable agricultural practices, emphasizing the need for bio-fortification, reducing post-harvest losses, and improving technology adoption among smallholder farmers. Archana Stalin shared, "We support smallholder farmers by revitalizing their farming methods. Initially, we transitioned them from monocropping to a diverse 'food forest' model and introduced integrated livestock practices, natural pest controls, and improved water management."

Apart from the panel discussion there was also an interactive workshop, which dealt with themes like climate action.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 30, 1974

Kannada as Court Language Shortly

Bangalore, April 29: Government was hopeful of introducing shortly Kannada as the language of all courts other than the High Court, Mr. D.K. Naikar, Minister for Law and Municipal Administration, informed the Karnataka Assembly today.

Replying to the debate on the demands totalling Rs. 4.94 crores relating to Justice and Urban Development, the Minister said the Directorate of Translation which had been set up by the Government would facilitate this. The demands were voted.

The Minister said the question of pay rise for the judicial officers was being considered by the Government. The question of establishing a Bench of the High Court in Northern Karnataka also was under consideration.

No Immediate Move to Abolish Octroi

Bangalore, April 29: Government has no immediate proposal to abolish Octroi till a feasible alternative source of revenue was found, the Finance Minister, Mr. Ghorpade, informed the Karnataka Assembly to-day.

He said the Government was not in a hurry to do away with the Octroi as the revenue derived from it was about Rs. 8 crores annually. He said that local bodies and municipalities, which were getting sizable revenue from it, would not agree for its abolition till an alternative source which would not prove to be an undue burden on taxpayers, was found.

Dwarakish, the complete entertainer

Veteran cinematographer BS Basavaraj and National Award-winning director, KM Chaitanya, who worked with Dwarakish for more than a decade, share their experiences with the legendary actor

Man of many moods (Clockwise from far right) Dwarakish with KM Chaitanya, Meghana and Chiranjeevi Sarja at the muhurat of *Aatagara*; with Lokesh in *Adrushtavanta*, with Dilip Kumar who visited him on set; with Manjula in *Manku Thimma*. PHOTOS: BS BASAVARAJ AND KM CHAITANYA

Shilpa Anandraj

Though the name Bungle Shama Rao Dwarakanath, might not ring a bell to many, the name Dwarakish will have Kannada film aficionados nodding and smiling in recognition. Dwarakish, who passed away on April 16, 2024, at the age of 81 was not just an actor, but a director, producer and a comedian too with a career spanning over five decades in Kannada cinema.

The actor started his innings in cinema with a cameo in his uncle, Hunasur Krishnamoorty's film, *Veera Sankalpa* in 1964 and has acted in many Kannada films since. He had a knack of making fun of himself on screen with digs about his height in films such as *Kittu Puttu*, *Singaporinalli Raja Kulla*, and *Kalla Kulla*.

He often worked in tandem with the late comedians Balakrishna and Narasimharaju. The trio would keep us in splits with their antics in films such as *Guru Shishyaru*.

If he tickled your funny bones with his comedy, we have also seen him as the unconventionally stylish hero, wooing a Chinese girl in *Singaporinalli Raja Kulla*.

When not acting, Dwarakish was busy producing hit films including *Mayor Muttanna, Bhagyavantaru, Nyaya Ellide, Manku Thimma* or *Nee Barada Kadambari*. Some of his top films have featured the late Dr Vishnuvardhan and Dr Rajkumar in the lead.

A man with a Midas touch, the films Dwarakish produced, whether original stories or remakes like *Aaptamitra* (remake of the Malayalam film *Manichitrathazhu),* Nee Barada Kadambari (remake of *Pyaar Jhukta Nahi)* or *Indina Ramayana* (remake of the Tamil film *Oorukku Upadesam)* they were all commercially successful.

Dwarakish had highs and lows professionally. He faced heavy financial losses with films such as *Africadalli Sheela*.

Dwarakish took time off from making films to bounce back.

Veteran cinematographer BS Basavaraj, winner of the Nandi Lifetime Achievement Award, mentored by the legendary VK Murthy and National Award-winning director, KM Chaitanya who worked with Dwarakish for more than a decade, share their work experiences with the legendary actor.

Basavaraj met Dwarakish in 1972 during the making of *Doorada Betta*. "I have been associated with him ever since. Immediately after this film, he started working on *Singaporinalli Raja Kulla*. The majority of the film was shot in Singapore. It was one of the first Kannada films to be shot entirely abroad."

Generous showman

Dwarakish, Basavaraj says, was so generous and thoughtful, he flew the entire crew. "He booked us into hotels close to places where we would get south Indian food. He was mindful of everything and everyone."

Known for his grit and determination, Basavaraj says Dwarakish was a showman and had a clean, neat way of making films. "He was a man of his word, who always worked with deadlines and goals. He was dynamic and if he was unhappy with a scene he would candidly suggest to the director how he wanted the scene to be shot."

For *Singaporinalli Raja Kulla*, Basavaraj says Dwarakish cast a Chinese actor, Felina, opposite him.

Basavaraj says Dwarakish would put up massive sets for his films and say the story demanded it. "His sets were always the talk of the town so much that even Dilip Kumar visited Dwarakish on the sets of *Guru Shishyaru*. Dwarakish was a great thinker, Basavaraj says. "He could convince anyone. He could sell what ever film he made with ease and had great business acumen. He has worked with Rajinikanth. For remakes, he would adapt the story to Karnataka nativity without losing the core concept. When you watched the film would never feel it was a remake. The best example for this is *Bhagyavantaru,* which was a remake of the Tamil movie *Dheerga Sumangali*. "

Democratic function

While he pampered his lead actors, Basavaraj says Dwarakish did not let anyone talk down to a technician. "If anyone complained and ask for a technician to be changed, Dwarakish would replace the person who had a problem on the set and not the technician."

Going the extra mile

"Dwarakish remade *Ankush* in Kannada. He looked for a non-commercial director and specifically asked Nagabharana to direct the film. *Ravana Rajya* launched the famous Telugu actor Naseer."

Though Nagabharana did not believe in remakes, and *Ravana Rajya* is the only film he directed as a remake, Basavaraj says it was Dwarakish's convincing powers that made it happen. "Dwarakish also introduced Devaraj as the antagonist in this film. Despite being a remake, it went on to be a huge success." Basavaraj says Dwarakish was also bold to take on films that no one would dare to make.

"The bilingual *Ananda Bhairavi*' is a good example. It was a dance film with a lot of classical songs and Dwarakish cast Girish Karnad to play the lead in it." If he put his mind to it, Basavaraj says, Dwarakish would do everything to accomplish it. "A man of taste and style. There will never be another like him. I lost not just a colleague but a dear friend."

Focus on one

KM Chaitanya met Dwarakish for the first time when he came for the muhurat of Sumana Kittur's *Edegarike*.

Before they met, Chaitanya says he had heard of Dwarakish, seen his work and knew him to be an ambitious man.

"When I wrote *Aatagara* with Kannan and we were looking for a producer, Kannan connected with Dwarakish's son, Yogish. Till then Dwarakish Chitra (his banner) was known to make commercial cinema and we did not think they would be interested in an experimental film like *Aatagara*, which was planned as a low-budget film with 10 new comers."

Question of reach

Yogish returned the next day saying they liked the script and were willing to invest three to four crores on the film. "They wanted us to bring established actors on board. It was because of Dwarakish that *Aatagara* became a multistarrer film. Dwarakish told me to make the film in a commercial manner so that it reaches more people and they also enjoy watching it." *Aatagara* went on to become a huge hit for Dwarakish Chitra and Chaitanya. "I went on to direct *Aake* and *Amma I Love You* with Dwarakish Chitra. I must be one of the last directors to have worked with Dwarakish's production house."

Always patient

Though intimidated, Chaitanya constantly bombarded Dwarakish with questions. "He never got irritated and answered every query with a smile. He was proud of his successes and flops. Most producers regret their flops. But not Dwarakish. 'He would say: '*Africadalli Sheela* was made on a grand scale. The film did not do well, but was one of the largest-budgeted films of its time'."

He was open to new ideas and moved with the times. He was one of the few producers who appreciated new directors and their experimentations." " Dwarakish, Chaitanya says was a true entertainer.

Proactive stance Where the climate is concerned, it pays to think about tomorrow today. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Weathering the storm

Our planet is changing. Soaring temperatures, extreme weather events, and rising sea levels are stark reminders of the urgency of climate action. But amidst the anxieties and feelings of helplessness, there is also a growing movement for hope and resilience.

A relevant workshop, 'Climate Samvada: Conversations On Well being And Hope,' tackles these issues head-on. This day-long, immersive experience uses theatre-based exercises to explore our personal and collective feelings around climate collapse.

Led by sociologist Benson Issac, the workshop will delve into the mental health impact of climate change and aims to foster resilience through discussions and activities.

Participants will have the space to process their anxieties about a changing environment, while also brainstorming ways to move from despair to a future filled with hope and solidarity. Issac, with his background in social movements and mental health, aims to equip participants with tools to adapt and build resilience in the face of environmental and social challenges.

This bilingual workshop (Kannada and English) is a timely opportunity to connect with others and explore how we can move forward with a sense of urgency and hope.

Join the workshop at Science Gallery Bengaluru on May 4, 11am onwards. This programme is open to audience between 15 and 28 years. Please carry identity proof of the same. For more information and registration, visit carbon.scigalleryblr.org.

How *Alindia Radio* documents a rare tradition

Shailaja Tripathi

We have a plethora of folk music traditions, where each note is a testament to the rich cultural heritage – from Karnataka's *Bhavageete*, which stirs hearts with its poetic depth and the Baul musicians of Bengal, who signify devotion to Sohar of Rajasthan that celebrates childbirth and Chhattisgarh's *Pandavani*, which retells epics with fervour.

From such a wide array of musical traditions, filmmaker Rangaswamy S has trained his lens on a musical community known as Neelagaras. They travel from one village to another singing the story of Manteswamy.

Rangaswamy looks at the community of singers through a fictitious character called Madappa in *Alindia Radio*. The film shows how Neelagara Madappa spends time spreading the teachings of Manteswamy and is drawn to the magic of the radio. Madappa's commitment to the cause decreases in his desire to earn more money. In the process, he is exploited by people, who bring out cassettes, CDs and books without his knowledge. Madappa is devastated by the end of it all. The film was screened at the 15th edition of BIFFes (Bengaluru International Film Festival).

Losing out to lucre Goutam Mysore as Neelagara Madappa in *Alindia Radio*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Manteswami was a Veerashaiva saint, who lived in the 15th century, and fought against dowry, caste-based exploitation and domestic violence. His stories and preachings are found in *Manteswami Kavya*, sung by his disciples – the Neelagaras, mostly found in the regions of Mysore, Mandya, and Chamarajanagar in South Karnataka. They narrate the folk epic to the accompaniment of string instruments, cymbals and drums. The language and expression of the songs are simple. The songs carry the messages of bhakti and life's philosophy.

Rangaswamy made the film inspired by senior Kannada writer Amaresh Nugadoni's short story *Daivakke modalu sharanembevu*. He also took reference from *Dharege Doddavaru*, a work based on Manteswamy's life. "Apart from these references, I had discussions with well-known Neelagara Malavalli Mahadevaswamy and Pichalli Srinivas. The latter is also the singer and music composer of the film." The lead role has been essayed by theatre actor Goutam Mysore.

The film, which highlights the loss of a musical tradition and human values, has been screened at the Indo-French International Film Festival and Indian Film Festival in Melbourne.

CITYBEATS

Classic Chinese

MAY 1 TO 31

Cantan presents an ode to Chinese cuisine with dishes created by Chef Charles Ma, a well-known culinary icon. Some the dishes that have made it to this menu are classic Chinese fried chicken and sesame shrimp toast as well as summer special cocktails. Food prices start at ₹395 plus taxes.

At Cantan, Lavelle Road. Dial 48669269.

Truly Asia

MAY 1 TO 16

SuzyQ, Queens Road, will be hosting an Asian food festival called Around Asia in 45 days. The focus of this festival is celebrating the culinary heritage of Vietnam, China, Japan, Indonesia and Thailand. The menu will include soups, salads, dumplings, chicken *gyoza, mee goreng* and *thukpa* with cocktails and desserts.

Dial 918047250088 to reserve your table.

Medley of flavours

ON WEEKENDS

Weekend Specials at Justbe by Nidhi Nahata presents an exclusive dish called The Valley, which is the host's way of promoting mindful eating.

This plant-based dining experience creates this dish with apple, pear, green apple, micro greens and lettuce, topped with a cheese vinegar dressing.

Call Justbe by Nidhi Nahata on 95138 04561.

SC issues notice to govt. on petition of non-believer Muslim

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday sought the Union government's response to a petition filed by a Kerala-based woman, who said she, though born a Muslim, is now a non-believer, and should be governed by the secular statutes rather than the Sharia law.

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, heading a three-judge Bench, said P.M. Safiya, a resident of Alappuzha district and represented by advocate Prashant Padmanabhan, has raised an "important issue". The court issued formal notices to the Centre and the State of Kerala. The case was posted for detailed hearing in July.

Mr. Padmanabhan submitted that the Supreme Court has already underscored that the "fundamental postulate of secularism which treats all religions on an even platform and allows to each individual the fullest liberty to believe or not to believe".

To realise the full meaning of what the top court intended, Mr. Padmanabhan submitted that a person who leaves her faith should not incur any disqualification in matters of inheritance or other important civil rights.

"Persons who do not want to be governed by the Muslim Personal Law must be allowed to be governed by the secular law of the country, viz, the Indian Succession Act, 1925 both in the case of intestate and testamentary succession," the petition said.

Inheritance right

Ms. Safiya said that once she leaves her faith in Islam, she will be ousted from her community and will not be entitled to any inheritance right in her parental property.

"The petitioner wishes to get a declaration that she shall not be governed by Muslim Personal Law for any of the matters listed in Sections 2 or 3 of the Muslim Personal Law [Shariat] Application Act, 1937, but there is no provision either in the Act or in the Rules wherein she can obtain such a certificate. There is a clear vacuum in the statute that can be plugged by judicial interpretation," the petition noted.

It noted that the legal vacuum would leave the petitioner with no recourse to succeed to her parental property even if she officially got a no-religion, no-caste certificate from an authority. This state of affairs was a direct violation of the fundamental right to believe (or not to believe) in a religion under Article 25 of the Constitution, Mr. Padmanabhan said.

CPI(M) tells LDF convener not to hobnob with middlemen

Party Kerala secretary Govindan says the secretariat saw no wrong in meeting leaders from rival political outfits; dismisses claim that BJP had held talks with E.P. Jayarajan in Chennai and Delhi

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The CPI(M) State Secretariat on Monday counselled Left Democratic Front (LDF) convener E.P. Jayarajan to sever connection with self-styled power broker T.G. Nandakumar.

However, it stopped short of reprimanding Mr. Jayarajan for stirring up an election day controversy by publicly admitting that he had met the BJP's Kerala in-charge Prakash Javadekar, together with Mr. Nandakumar, at his son's apartment in Thiruvananthapuram last March. Mr. Jayarajan will continue as LDF convener.

Facing troubles: LDF convener E.P. Jayarajan leaving AKG Centre after attending CPI(M) meeting on Monday.

CPI(M) State Secretary M.V. Govindan said the secretariat saw no wrong in party apparatchiks meeting leaders from rival political outfits. However, Mr. Govindan said such meetings in the company of "dubious persons" generated politically damaging optics and made the party leadership vulnerable to public criticism and Opposition attacks.

Mr. Govindan said the secretariat tasked Mr. Jayarajan to seek legal recourse to bring the slanderers to book. Mr. Govindan denied that Mr. Jayarajan's public admission of his meeting with Mr. Javadekar had disadvantaged the CPI(M) on poll day and ceded a propaganda advantage to the Congress and the BJP. He said Mr. Jayarajan had come clean about the meeting to parry the Congress-BJP misinformation campaign.

Mr. Govindan dismissed BJP leader Shobha Surendran's claim that the BJP had held talks with Mr. Jayarajan in Chennai and Delhi. He said Mr. Jayarajan did not require to report the impromptu meeting with Mr. Javadekar where no politics was on the table to the party's leadership.

'Drought relief of ₹3,400 cr. allotted to Karnataka'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Centre informed the Supreme Court on Monday about its allotment of over ₹3,400 crore to Karnataka to provide relief to the drought-affected parts of the State. Appearing before a Bench headed by Justice B.R. Gavai, Attorney-General R. Venkataramani apprised the court of the development.

The Bench asked the Centre to place on record a report by the Inter-Ministerial Central Team.

On April 22, the Centre urged the court to give it a week to iron out issues on the release of calamity relief.

The court had advised the Centre to amicably resolve differences with Karnataka, saying that was the healthy thing to do in a federal structure. "Both the Union and the States are equal partners," the Bench, also comprising Sandeep Mehta, had highlighted to Mr. Venkataramani.

On April 8, the apex court had similarly questioned the Centre about the steady stream of States moving court against the Union Government. Recently, Tamil Nadu Government too accused the Centre in the Supreme Court of treating the people of the State in a "step-motherly" fashion by delaying the release of disaster relief funds to the tune of nearly ₹38,000 crore to help tide over the twin calamities of cyclone Michaung and unprecedented floods in the southern districts. Likewise, Kerala filed a first-of-its-kind suit directly in the apex court, blaming the Centre of arbitrarily interfering in its net borrowing limits, pushing the State to the brink of a financial emergency.

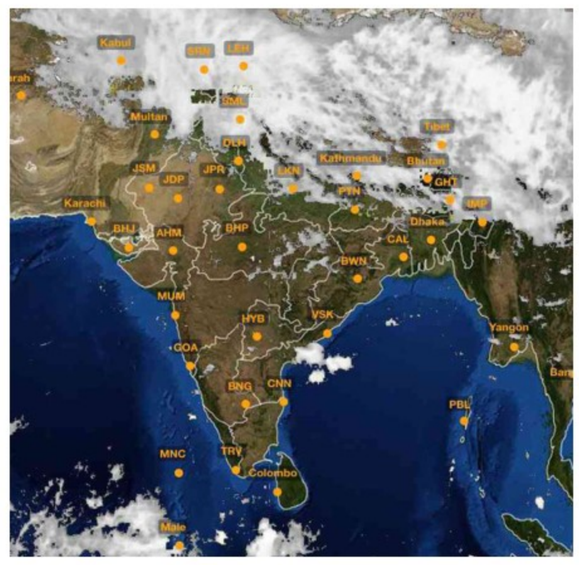
The court had asked why the Union Government had sought to enter into a "contest" with water-starved Karnataka over its request for drought relief.

"Let there be no contest here between the Union and the State... We are seeing various State Governments having to appear in court," Justice Gavai had said on April 8.

On April 22, Mr. Venkataramani had said the Centre had to solicit the concurrence of the Election Commission of India before dealing with Karnataka's issues owing to the fact that the Lok Sabha elections were on.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Sikkim, Kerala and Lakshadweep. Hot and humid weather likely to prevail over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and coastal Karnataka

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	38.4	29.2	Kozhikode	—	38.1	29.2
Ahmedabad	—	40.3	28.2	Kurnool	—	44.3	31.0
Aizawl	16	35.2	20.4	Lucknow	—	41.6	24.6
Allahabad	—	44.2	24.5	Madurai	—	40.2	28.1
Bengaluru	—	37.8	28.0	Mangaluru	—	35.4	27.6
Bhopal	—	40.8	25.7	Mumbai	—	39.1	27.0
Bhubaneswar	—	41.3	27.9	Mysuru	—	37.5	26.0
Chandigarh	—	31.2	25.0	New Delhi	—	38.3	22.8
Chennai	—	37.9	27.4	Patna	—	41.6	28.3
Coimbatore	—	39.8	26.8	Port Blair	—	33.4	26.3
Dehradun	—	34.9	15.1	Puducherry	—	36.8	27.7
Gangtok	18	23.3	14.9	Pune	—	42.5	26.6
Goa	—	34.4	28.0	Raipur	—	41.0	26.1
Guwahati	—	34.0	20.6	Ranchi	—	39.6	24.9
Hubballi	—	40.0	24.0	Shillong	—	27.8	17.4
Hyderabad	—	41.6	29.3	Shimla	2	17.8	15.4
Imphal	0.8	32.4	19.9	Srinagar	39	8.8	5.3
Jaipur	—	38.8	25.7	Thiruvananthapuram	—	35.2	28.8
Kochi	—	34.4	28.8	Tiruchi	—	40.3	28.0
Kohima	2	27.0	15.4	Vijayawada	—	40.5	28.2
Kolkata	—	42.0	28.0	Visakhapatnam	—	34.2	28.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	7	46	8	186	159	
Bengaluru	10	17	27	68	85	
Chennai	4	9	64	42	42	
Delhi	20	69	66	351	331	
Hyderabad	12	47	36	421	—	
Kolkata	19	20	53	71	94	
Lucknow	6	56	24	263	154	
Mumbai	—	29	24	291	130	
Pune	90	105	118	105	98	
Visakhapatnam	12	54	24	43	96	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Dhanbad, Jharkhand recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 385 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Puducherry recorded a healthy AQI score of 25

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

'I jumped into the poll fray for ideological reasons'

He says a 'disciplined soldier' like him cannot keep quiet when injustice is being meted out to the party and points out that he will rejoin BJP to support Mr. Modi 'soon after winning' the polls

INTERVIEW

K.S. Eshwarappa

B.S. Satish Kumar
SAGAR (SHIVMOGGA)

K.S. Eshwarappa during an interaction with *The Hindu* at Sagar.
K. MURALI KUMAR

BJP rebel leader K.S. Eshwarappa says his decision to contest the Lok Sabha polls from Shivamogga against the party's official candidate B.Y. Raghavendra, son of veteran leader B.S. Yediyurappa, is for ideological reasons.

The 75-year-old, now expelled from the BJP, has a nearly five-decade association with the party.

He says only a "disciplined soldier" of the party like him can take such a decision "to protect the party and ensure that it is in sync with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ideology."

In an interview with *The Hindu*, the leader claims he is getting the support of workers of all the three major political parties BJP, Congress and JD(S). He says he would rejoin the party to support Mr. Modi "soon after winning" the polls.

Excerpts from the interview

Exactly a year ago, you were being hailed as a "disciplined soldier" of BJP as you abided by the party's instructions to desist from contesting Assembly polls. But now you are a rebel candidate. What went wrong?

Only disciplined soldiers can think of ensuring discipline in the party. Opportunist politicians cannot do this.

I have grown up being part of the RSS right from my childhood. I have seen how Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L.K. Advani built the party through their penance.

But the father-son duo (Mr. Yediyurappa and Mr. Vijayendra) are squandering the penance of great leaders.

I have been abiding by the party's instructions every time...

Even now, I am committed to the party. But I cannot keep quiet when injustice is being meted out to the party. I am contesting because I am a disciplined soldier.

What about your son missing out on a party ticket to contest Lok Sabha polls from Haveri?

My son not getting party ticket is one of the several reasons for me entering the poll fray as Mr. Yediyurappa had promised a ticket for him. But the main reason is ideological. Earlier, the party used to believe in collective leadership. But now, only the father and son decide everything.

Did any BJP central leader try to convince you against contesting?

Union Home Minister Amit Shah had a telephonic conversation with me and also invited me to Delhi.

I had insisted that he should not force me to not contest. But he denied appointment to me after going to Delhi, may be because I was firm on contesting.

Had you expected that you will face disciplinary action?

Yes, as this is the system that the BJP follows. The BJP had expelled former chief minister Jagadish Shettar too after he joined the Congress during the Assembly polls. But the State party state leaders went to his house and brought him back. Am I worse than him?

You have been expelled from the BJP for six years? What next?

I will win the polls cent per cent. The Congress workers are supporting me saying that a weak candidate has been fielded by the Congress in Shivamogga as per the request of Mr. Yediyurappa. The JD(S) workers are with me as they believe that Vokkaliga leaders like C.T. Ravi, Pratap Simha were denied ticket because of Mr. Yediyurappa.

The BJP leaders say that they would support me without joining me as they may be denied ticket to contest the next Urban Local Bodies' polls. The common people are with me for my ideological stand.

Are you planning to meet BJP central leaders after the polls?

Yes, I will go to Delhi immediately after winning the polls to rejoin the BJP, which is like my mother, and to support Mr. Modi, which is my duty. He is in my heart and I will win the polls on his name.

Panel favours reopening elephant corridor

Sandeep Vellaram
IDUKKI

An expert panel appointed by the Kerala High Court to address human-wildlife conflict in Chinnakanal in Kerala's Idukki district has recommended the reopening of the elephant corridor from Anayirankal to Old Devikulam in Munnar.

In its recent report submitted to the court, the panel suggests both short-term and long-term measures to tackle the issue.

Chinnakanal is the former habitat of Arikomban, the wild elephant that regularly raided ration shops for rice. Following repeated attacks, the tusker was translocated to a tiger reserve in Tamil Nadu. The move evoked protests from some quarters.

A wild elephant roaming in Chinnakkanal in Idukki, Kerala.
JOMON PAMPAVALLEY

Highlighting the isolation of the elephant population in Chinnakanal, the panel underscored the critical importance of providing it access to the broader Munnar landscape. Securing the corridor between Anayirankal and Old Devikulam, spanning a 60-acre shola forest, can facilitate the free movement of wild elephants and give them access to a vast 4,500 sq. km area within the Munnar landscape.

The panel recommended voluntary relocation of two colonies spanning 301 acres and 80 acres of Chinnakanal. The possibility of declaring the area as a conservation reserve is suggested to deter illegal activities.

In terms of immediate action, the panel has proposed installing solar fencing around ration shops to prevent elephant attacks.

The panel recommended close observation of tuskers such as 'Padayappa' to prevent them from approaching human habitations. They should not be captured under the pretext of damage to property. The presence of such tuskers is critical to maintaining genetic viability. Their removal will lead to a vacuum, which will be filled by another tusker or herd, the panel noted.

Rail Wheel Plant/Bela
(Distt. - Saran), Bihar - 841221

E-Open Tender Notice No:- S/RWP/E/2024-25/05 dated: 27.04.2024. Principal Chief Materials Manager/Rail Wheel Plant, Bela for and on behalf of the **President of India** invites **online "e-Open Tender"**, through Indian Railways E-Procurement Website **www.ireps.gov.in**, for supply of following Stores item at RWP/Bela. The closing time of all tenders is 14:00 hrs., **SN: 1, Tender No.:** 02245028A, **Short Description of item:** Circular Lifting Magnet, **Quantity:** 01 nos., **Date of Tender Closing/Opening:** 25.05.2024. 1. Website address, on which full tender details can be seen and downloaded from, is **www.ireps.gov.in**. 2. The prospective firms/bidders submitting bid are advised to remain in touch with the above website for updates including **Addendum/Corrigendum/ Cancellation** with respect to the above tender. However, this information will also be invariably published in the all concerned newspapers.

For PCMM/RWP/Bela
RWP/CPRO/ADVT/2024-25/15

PUBLIC NOTICE

On Behalf of my client **Syed Nawab Pasha,** S/o Late Syed Sab, (Mobile No.9844186456) No.375, 10th Cross, Shastri Nagar, BSK 2nd Stage, Bangalore-28 it is informed to the General Public that my client while shifting the House to Shastri Nagar on 09/03/2024 have Lost the ORIGINAL SALE DEED of my father Syed Sab which property is bearing New Municipal No.818, Old No.375, earlier No.15/1, PID No.59-43-818 situated at 10th Cross, Shastrinagar, Bangalore-28 totally measuring 675 Sq.ft., Original Sale Deed dt:- 15/02/1975 registered as document No.3888/74-75 of Book I Volume 281 at Pages 57 to 58 registered in the office of Sub-registrar, Jayanagar, Bangalore, after the death of Syed Sab, all legal heirs of Late Syed Sab have registered RELEASE DEED dt:- 14/08/2019 in favor of My client who is presently in possession of said property from the date of Release Deed. My Client made sincere efforts to search the above original document, he could not trace the same, however my client has lodged Complaint before the concerned Police Station dt:- 23/04/2024 as per Lost Report No. 1025368/2024 hence this Public Notice. If anybody founds the above document they may kindly handover the same to the address of Advocate or to the below mentioned address: No.818, Old No.375, 10th Cross, Shastrinagar, BSK 2nd Stage, Bangalore-28

R.A. RAHMAN, Advocate
#1, Tippu Chambers, 2nd Floor, 4th Cross N.R. Road, Bangalore -560 002.
Date: 29-04-2024

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

DR. N. JEEJI BAI

November 15, 1937 – April 25, 2024

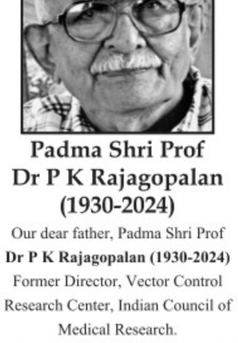
With deep sorrow we announce the demise of Dr. Jeeji Bai, who breathed her last peacefully on April 25, 2024 at 3.30 pm at Bengaluru. She was 86 years old, survived by an elder brother and two sisters.

Dr. Jeeji Bai was a renowned Algologist obtained her M.Sc in Botany in 1960 and PhD degree in Algal Taxonomy in 1965 from the University of Madras. Her contributions in the field of Algology particularly Spirulina as Nutritional Supplement for the Malnourished were outstanding that she earned the prestigious Alexander Von Humboldt Fellowship to work at Univ. of Tübingen, Germany, Pool Officer at CFTRI, Mysore, Post-doctoral fellow at the Univ. of Madras, Federal Government Employment at Institute of Algal Research & Technology at Dortmund, Germany, Lecturer, CAS in Botany, Univ. of Madras, Chennai, Scientist at Murugappa Chettiar Research Centre, Chennai and Consultant Scientist, Parry Agro Industries. She was the recipient of Life Time Achievement Award by Krishnamurthy Institute of Algology in the year 2012.

The family, friends and the scientific community pay their homage to Dr. Jeeji Bai.

Contact: +91 89035 06708

DEATH



Padma Shri Prof Dr P K Rajagopalan (1930-2024)

Our dear father, Padma Shri Prof **Dr P K Rajagopalan (1930-2024)** Former Director, Vector Control Research Center, Indian Council of Medical Research.
Attained the lotus feet of the Lord at **10:15 a.m. 29th April 2024.**
Bereaved family
Gowri & Dr. C.S. Ramachandran
Ramya & Ravi Rajagopalan
Dr.Lata & Dr. Murlidhar Rajagopalan and his beloved grand children.
Ph: Ravi - 9987457802
Dr. Murlidhar - 9840045500.

IN MEMORY OF YOUR LOVED ONES

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Matters of heartland

Livelihood issues compete with caste and religious identities in campaigning

The Hindi heartland, more often than not, decides who forms the government in Delhi. Of the 189 Lok Sabha seats in the six States of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, U.P. and Uttarakhand that make up the very core of this territory, votes have been cast for 71 seats, in the first two phases. In Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan – where the BJP won the Assembly polls last year – the two principal national parties are in a direct contest which could determine who gets to lead the next government. For the BJP, the general election had begun on a high note with Prime Minister Narendra Modi setting the target of 400 seats for the party and its allies to win, even before the poll notification on March 16. The very next day, he even asked the Cabinet to draft the plan for the first 100 days of the next government which he is confident of forming. The Opposition on the other hand, began its campaign from a position of relative weakness and far less enthusiasm. The constituents of the INDIA bloc were still fighting among themselves on the seat-sharing formula. Developments since then have led to fresh questions. The Supreme Court-dictated disclosure of electoral bond data, and the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by the ED, were two events that energised the Opposition's low-key campaign and highlighted the issues of economic downslide, inflation and unemployment.

The BJP is trying to counter this with a far sharper cry on nationalism, and Hindu consolidation. It terms the Opposition as being 'anti-Santana dharma", and is targeting the Congress and labelling its manifesto as having an "imprint of the Muslim League". An apparent fear among Hindu subaltern segments with regard to the '400-plus' slogan has now put the BJP on the defensive. Statements by BJP leaders that a massive majority will enable it to rewrite the Constitution have been read as a threat by OBCs, Dalits and tribal communities. The BJP, with its ears to the ground, heard the fear, reflected in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speeches ahead of polling for the first phase, where he assured voters that the Constitution would not be tampered with. The BJP campaign is focused on explaining that there is no threat to caste reservations from it. And it accuses the Congress of planning reservations for Muslims. In the heartland where caste and communal identities are locked in a complex interplay, the BJP's success is determined by religious mobilisation that overwhelms caste. The Congress's promise of policies that advance economic and social justice are also at the centre of the campaign. While the Congress's hope is to galvanise the poor and the subaltern castes, the BJP is trying to instigate fear of a socialist dictatorship. That it is addressing the poorest of the country with the fear of redistribution of wealth is a particularly striking paradox of the heartland.

Trying for a repeat

India is looking to defend its astonishing title win in men's badminton

In an Olympic year, the quadrennial extravaganza dwarfs every other competition. This is especially true in a sport like badminton where the Olympic gold is the holy grail. Yet, events that lead up to the marquee sporting festival do carry importance, and the ongoing Thomas & Uber Cup in Chengdu, China, is one such tournament. The de facto 'World Cup' of badminton, the biennial championship became an indelible part of the national consciousness when the Indian men's outfit won its maiden Thomas Cup crown in 2022. While a repeat is very much in the realm of possibility, the strong Indian side (H.S. Prannoy, Lakshya Sen, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty among others) will look at it as a great opportunity to test their competitive mettle ahead of the Paris Olympics. Two years ago, the triumph had acted as a springboard for Satwiksairaj and Chirag, who went on to clinch the coveted Asian Games doubles gold in 2023 and help secure a historic team silver before becoming the first Indians to be ranked No.1 in doubles. Prannoy, India's No.1 singles player and an Asian Games bronze medallist, will be looking for similar inspiration after a not-so-good year while Lakshya will be keen to sharpen his skills ahead of his first-ever Olympics.

The women's Uber Cup roster does not include the Olympics-bound trio of singles star P.V. Sindhu and doubles practitioners Ashwini Ponnappa and Tanisha Crasto. The three have prioritised a solid training block – a luxury in a chock-a-block tournament calendar – while an inexperienced side gets a taste of elite-level badminton. The focus will be on 17-year-old Anmol Kharb, who played a stellar role in India winning the Badminton Asia Team Championship in February, and Isharani Baruah, 20. There is also an expectation forAshmita Chaliha, 24, long marked out for success, to make good on her promise. The tourney comes at a time when India is looking to restock its women's singles cupboard. As Saina Nehwal inches closer to retirement, the cabinet, barring two-time Olympic medallist Sindhu, has appeared bare in recent times. But going by the results in Chengdu, there is optimism that the next generation of stars could emerge from this lot. They have beaten Canada and Singapore back to back – by convincing 4-1 scorelines – to qualify for the quarterfinals, and further progress will confirm the green shoots. Even as all eyes are on the Thomas Cup defence and Olympics preparation, the women in the Uber Cup can well make it a week to remember.

The EVM-VVPAT case judgment is disappointing

"Statistical thinking will one day be as necessary for efficient citizenship as the ability to read and write." – H.G. Wells

In February 1897, the House of Representatives of the U.S. State of Indiana passed Bill no. 246 that sought to legislatively establish the 'true value' of pi (π) as 3.20. This strange Bill was introduced at the behest of a certain Edward Goodwin who claimed to have solved the ancient geometrical problem of "squaring the circle" thanks to a revelation from god, but it required changing the value of pi to 3.20! Fortunately, the Bill was stalled by Indiana's Senate due to the efforts of a mathematician called C.A. Waldo, and Indiana was saved from embarrassment.

My point in narrating this anecdote is that in the fields of science, mathematics and statistics, truths cannot be established by fiats of the executive, parliament or the judiciary. Just as Parliament cannot legislate water to run uphill, the Supreme Court of India cannot arbitrarily mandate that a uniform sample size of "5 EVMs per Assembly Constituency" is good enough for Voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT)-based audit of electronic voting machines (EVMs) for all Assembly Constituencies across the country. With due respect, its sample size does not conform to fundamental principles of statistical sampling theory.

Voter verification of VVPAT slips ensures that the votes have been "recorded as cast" but it is no guarantee that they have been "counted as recorded". There is always some risk, however small, of EVM malfunction or manipulation. To ensure "counted as recorded", we should tally the EVM count with the manual count of VVPAT slips for a statistically significant sample size of EVMs drawn at random from a suitably defined 'population' of EVMs.

K. Ashok Vardhan Shetty

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India needs a statistically sound VVPAT-based system of EVM audit which can detect instances of mismatch with 99% or 99.9% accuracy; and done at the beginning of counting day

A typical case

The VVPAT-based audit of EVMs is a typical case of "lot acceptance sampling", a statistical quality control technique widely used in industry and trade. If the number of defectives found in a randomly drawn, statistical sample is less than or equal to a specified 'acceptance number', the entire lot (or 'population') is accepted; otherwise, the entire lot is rejected. We define a 'defective EVM' as one which has a mismatch between the EVM count and the VVPAT count due to EVM malfunction or manipulation. We specify the acceptance number as 'zero defective EVM'.

The Supreme Court did not specify the 'population' of EVMs to which its sample size relates and the 'next steps' in the event of a 'defective EVM' turning up in a sample. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has also chosen to leave them vague. Both these are important because in the event of one or more 'defective EVMs' turning up in a sample, the entire 'population' from which that sample was drawn should be 'rejected'. In other words, manual counting of VVPAT slips should be done for all the remaining EVMs of that particular 'population' and its results declared based on VVPAT count only.

Statistical sampling theory tells us that the probability that the Court-mandated sample size will fail to detect a 'defective EVM' is 95% if 'EVMs deployed in an Assembly Constituency' are defined as the 'population', and 70% if 'EVMs deployed in a Parliamentary Constituency' are defined as the 'population'. This defeats the very purpose of introducing VVPAT.

Reasons behind the ECI's claim

The ECI has claimed that there was not a single instance of mismatch between the EVM count and the VVPAT count in all these years. Leaving aside the fact that this is not true, there could be three possible reasons for the very few mismatches: the EVMs are in fine fettle; the prescribed sample size is erroneous and fails to detect a 'defective EVM' most of the time; both. The correct answer is the last one – both. The ECI and the Supreme Court cannot proclaim "all is well" with the present egregiously wrong sample size and opaque audit protocol.

The Court's judgment in the *Association for Democratic Reforms vs Election Commission of India and Another* (2024) is disappointing because it did not compel the ECI to make public how it has defined the 'population' to which its sample size relates and its 'next steps' in the event of a mismatch.

The Court also did not clarify these points on its own after seeking expert opinion. Even more disappointing was the ADR not pressing for these vital clarifications. Instead, it demanded a return to paper ballots or 100% verification of VVPAT slips. The Court was right in rejecting both these demands.

Other critics of the ECI have been guilty of demanding arbitrary, non-statistical "percentage samples" for EVM audit under the mistaken belief that a bigger "percentage sample" guarantees greater accuracy of results. Congress leader Kamal Nath sought a "10% sample" and lost (2018). Then Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu sought a "50% sample" and lost (2019).

The Supreme Court rightly rejected these demands but the uniform sample size prescribed by it in 2019 was equally arbitrary, non-statistical and wrong.

What needs to be done

We do not know and we do not need to know the various ways in which an EVM may fail or be manipulated. What we need to do is implement a statistically sound VVPAT-based system of EVM audit which can detect instances of mismatch with 99% or 99.9% accuracy. The matching exercise should be done at the beginning of the counting day. Not at the fag end. Where there is a perfect match, the results should be declared based on the EVM count. Only where there is a mismatch, should manual counting of VVPAT slips for all the remaining EVMs of the particular 'population' be done and its results declared based on the VVPAT count. This statistical sampling-based, 'management by exception' approach represents the golden mean.

Court's nudge on hospital charges, a reform opportunity

The Supreme Court of India, while hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in February this year, directed the central government to find ways to regulate the rates of hospital procedures in the private sector. The trigger for the PIL and directive were the high procedure rates and their large variations. The Court highlighted the problem using the procedure costs of cataract surgeries that cost only around ₹10,000 in a government set-up and between ₹30,000 to ₹1,40,000 in private hospitals. It invoked Rule 9 of the Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010, of which Clause 2 requires that "clinical establishments shall charge the rates for each type of procedures and services within the range of rates determined and issued by the Central Government from time to time, in consultation with State Governments". The Court ruled the Central Government Health Scheme rates as an interim measure if the government failed to find ways to regulate rates.

In India, care delivery is predominantly through private providers, with market-determined prices. Health-care markets are imperfect, leading to inefficiencies and inequities and require regulation. While a problem does exist, the proposed solution oversimplifies the complex issue. However, it is the right step if it aims to spark debate and spur action. Here, we outline key considerations for addressing these challenges.

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Affordable hospital care requires health-care financing reforms that go beyond price regulations

Benchmark for pricing

In an unregulated market-driven scenario, health-care providers focus on profit through higher prices and overprovision of care (supplier-induced demand). One potential solution, "yardstick competition", involves regulatory authorities setting benchmark prices based on market observations. However, this approach faces challenges in India due to diverse patient profiles, unreliable price data, and weak regulatory frameworks. Relying solely on competition from government hospitals is insufficient due to long wait times, perceived service quality issues, and patient information gaps, perpetuating the risk of supplier-induced demand.

As the Court observed, pricing-related discussions must start with a benchmark for price determination. Standard treatment guidelines, or STGs, can help establish relevant clinical needs, the nature and extent of care, and the costs of total inputs required. STGs can address confounders that account for varying levels of care for various hospital procedures while ensuring clinical autonomy to respond to individual needs. Consequently, it enables valuing health-care resources consumed for the precise cost of multiple procedures.

Given limited regulatory capacity, STG formulation and adoption require that providers' revenues are tied to fewer payers. Providers must rely on reimbursements from pooled payments, covering most of the population with low out-of-pocket (OOP) payment levels. With government support, payers and providers could agree on pricing that provides a reasonable and sustainable surplus over and above the input costs.

However, this would be hindered if providers could access markets with OOP payments as an alternative or add-on to reimbursement payments. Several countries have accomplished this difficult feat through coordinated health-care purchasing reforms, highlighting that pricing issues are health systems challenges rather than law-and-order problems.

In India, over half the total health expenditure is OOP. The other half comes from a multitude of publicly and privately pooled resources. The private sector is predominantly composed of small-scale providers. Even if rates are standardised, their implementation will be uncertain. Enforcement mechanisms for adherence to prescribed rates remain unclear, raising questions about the feasibility of such regulatory measures. What if providers do not adhere to the prescribed procedure rates, much like they have resisted the rates in various health schemes?

Weak implementation

Command-and-control regulations through pecuniary measures such as price caps can swiftly influence actors' behaviour by making them follow the pronouncements. However, when enforcement mechanisms are weak, these effects are temporary because the overall environment remains unchanged. The suggested measures face enormous enforcement challenges. Only 11 States and seven Union Territories have notified the Clinical Establishment Act, and its implementation remains weak, with little or no evidence about the impact on affordability, care quality, and provider behaviour.

Similar design and implementation capacity constraints have hampered the effective adoption of the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority's decision to cap the prices of stents and implants since 2017 and of the many directives that mandate doctors to prescribe generic medicines.

Rate standardisation, through capped prices, may not address the fundamental problem of stakeholders' misaligned incentives. A comprehensive health financing reform strategy informed by robust and ongoing research on appropriate processes for formulating and adopting STGs must be in place, without which the actual pricing can be manipulated and justified in any manner. For example, hospitals with lower average revenue per bed can push their rates higher by appealing to their better care quality. Without STGs, it will be nearly impossible to verify such claims objectively.

Limited data

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana and the Department of Health Research have made significant strides in developing STGs for common conditions and adopting a comprehensive costing framework. Efforts are also ongoing to create an Indian version of Diagnostics-Related Groups (DRGs). Although the insurance industry initiated STGs for hospitals in 2010, progress was hindered by a lack of representative and accurate costing data due to limited participation from private hospitals.

This judgment is an opportunity to create effective processes to solve a major health system problem. Rate standardisation policies must be feasible, easily implementable, and follow established price discovery practices. Future efforts must build on previous and ongoing health financing reforms, address anticipated challenges, and ensure broader stakeholder participation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

On the campaign trail

It is unfortunate that there is no let-up in bringing up unrelated issues in the speeches being made by the Prime Minister of India during his election campaigns (Inside pages, "Rahul insulted great kings, queens of this country: Modi", April, 29). It is undeniable that the rulers of the bygone era, irrespective of their religious identities, have made sterling contributions to society in multiple spheres. However, nothing will accrue if encomiums are showered on one band of kings or queens and mud slinging on the other. When a particular religion becomes a pawn in the hands of the Prime Minister, how could his own partymen be expected to keep a low profile on public platforms? It is hoped that the utterances by the leaders of all political parties in India are confined to the norms of etiquette and decorum, lest it will lead to distrust and misgivings among the people.

V. Johan Dhanakumar,
Chennai

The Prime Minister's latest speech, in Belagavi, has touched a new point. Day by day, the tone and tenor of his speeches seem to be getting more and more communal in content, which the Election Commission of India cannot easily ignore. The top leader's references to the role of nawabs, sultans, and particularly Aurangzeb, were neither warranted nor relevant. Raking up memories of the painful past is only going to result in bickering and will have a far-reaching impact on the communal front.

His speeches are unstatesmanly and unbecoming of his status. Let him not sacrifice communal amity at the altar of short-term political gains.

Is it too much to expect a proper and healthy response from the Prime Minister?

S.V. Venkatakrishnan,
Bengaluru

Import bill

The sorry state is that China is the top supplier to India in eight major industrial sectors, particularly in pharmaceuticals, textiles and electronic goods (Inside pages, "India's Chinese import bill up 2.3 times in 15 years", April 29). One wonders what happened to the 'Make in India' projects which were more laudably launched by the government of the day. We boasted of sending Covaxin and Covishield vaccines. Ironically, the Indian textile industry saw glory under the phase of history that the Prime Minister highlights in a critical way in his campaign speeches. Who can forget the quality of textiles like the muslin and linen of those days? Now, we look to China for textiles. The match-stick industry is heading to an end with the import of cigarette lighters from China. The BJP's election manifesto has nothing about industrial development or alarming imports from China.

Kiruba Arul,
Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu

On a leather hunt

If the massive scores being achieved by several teams in the current edition of the IPL are any indication it is becoming abundantly clear that the bowlers are being sent on a leather hunt and are being battered black and blue in every single match.

Full marks, however, to those bowlers who are still good enough to take five wickets in the four overs allotted to them. The shortest format is really a bonanza for batters.

C.V. Aravind,
Bengaluru

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

The poultry industry needs urgent reforms

Shreya Padukone

is Head of Programs, Animal Law Centre, Nalsar University of Law

The current outbreak of H5N1 was a disaster waiting to happen, as experts have been sounding alarm bells on the unsafe conditions at industrial livestock production for more than 10 years now. There has never been a more pressing time to discuss the welfare of farmed animals in the Indian enviro-legal perspective. India's environmental laws and regulations must reflect what the public health crisis is showing us: that animal welfare is closely interlinked with public health, ecosystem health and biodiversity conservation – the One Health principle.

Scale of the biosecurity issue

The first H5N1 infection spilt over to humans directly from chickens in Hong Kong in 1997. In India, the first H5N1 patient was reported in Maharashtra in 2006. An outbreak in December 2020 and early 2021 spread across 15 States. This pathogen has crossed many species barriers, causing mortality among the polar bears in the Arctic and seals and seagulls in Antarctica. With humans, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates the fatality rate for H5N1 at 52%, based on the 463 deaths recorded since 2003 among the 888 people diagnosed with the virus. Almost all cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H5N1) have been linked to close contact with infected birds, or contaminated environments.

These contaminated environments are created by cramming chickens in wired cages, or 'battery cages', in high densities. The resultant air quality and waste problem has a significant footprint in India due to the odour, particulate matter, and other greenhouse gas emissions. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has classified poultry units with more than 5,000 birds as a polluting industry that requires compliance and regulatory consent to establish and operate. Some poultry industrial units have been issued closure notices by the CPCB for being in violation of the law.

Due to contract farming, large debts and a very specialised skill set, poultry farmers often find it difficult to exit the industry, despite the losses. However, the myriad problems faced by these farmers often push them out of business. The farmers suffer due to market volatility and the prevalent practices pushed by industry giants. For instance, antibiotics are regularly given to birds as a prophylactic and as growth promoters so that more animals can be grown for greater profit. Experts predict the rising demand for protein will cause a surge in antibiotic use in livestock.

Several antibiotics classified as critically important and highly important by the WHO are widely sold to farmers for preventative use. Prescribed to day-old chicks to reduce the likelihood of disease and mortality, this practice is still being commonly recommended, according to an investigation by The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, reported in *The Hindu*.

Animals are heavily stocked in unsanitary conditions. Not only does this have a detrimental effect on the welfare of animals and the health of those who consume the food derived, but also on the people working at these facilities and residing in the vicinity. The impact of the emissions in the atmosphere, effluents in the water systems, and solid wastes in the soil generated by these industries is felt by humans, other animals, and the environment. There is an urgent need for monitoring as well as enforcement of legal and regulatory mechanisms.

The faecal matter generated at these facilities is collected periodically by local farmers for use as fertilizer. The amount of piled-up manure exceeds the carrying capacity of the land and becomes a pollutant. Farmers complain of their crops getting damaged and piles of waste becoming a breeding ground for disease vectors such as flies. Residents are compelled to adopt measures such as spraying insecticides inside homes, leading to breathlessness and a nauseating smell.

Keeping animals in intensive confinement constitutes a crime under the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960. Moreover, the operational activities at these industrial facilities cause unnecessary pain and suffering to the animals because of mutilation, starvation, thirst, overcrowding, and other ill-treatment, which is also a violation of the PCA Act.

Path to legal reform

The 269th Law Commission of India Report in 2017 placed on record a representation by the Tata Memorial Centre that contained evidence that non-therapeutic antibiotics given to poultry cause antibiotic resistance since living conditions are unhygienic. It further said that with more open, cleaner, and ventilated living spaces, animals are less likely to need constant antibiotics, making their eggs and meat safer for consumption. Finally, it made recommendations for a set of two draft rules for the welfare of chickens in the meat and egg industries, noting that improved animal welfare results in better and safer food. These rules laid down guidelines as per existing laws and international best practices for animal care, waste management, and antibiotic use, among others.

However, the Draft Rules for the egg industry released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare in 2019 are weak and tokenistic. They must meet the recommendations of the Law Commission. Strict oversight for compliance and enforcement of environmental regulations is the need of the hour, given the CPCB's reclassification of the poultry industry as a highly polluting 'orange category' industry. In light of the bird flu public health crisis and the climate emergency, it is crucial for the situation to be addressed.

India's environmental laws and regulations must reflect what the public health crisis is showing us: that animal welfare is closely interlinked with public health, ecosystem health and biodiversity conservation

Pulling out all the stops in Kerala

The BJP intensified its campaign this time, but remains unsure of winning seats

STATE OF PLAY

Biju Govind
biju.govind@thehindu.co.in

There were key takeaways from the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections in Kerala. The first was the fact that Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the State five times in just four months. This is an unprecedented number for Mr. Modi, who did not make such efforts in Kerala during Lok Sabha or Assembly elections in the past.

The second was that the two main rival parties – the Congress and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) – approached these polls with a political fervour usually seen only in Assembly elections. However, given that the voter turnout was only 71.27%, much lower than the 77.84% recorded in the 2019 polls, both the parties are now cautiously awaiting the outcome.

With lofty electoral ambitions and a strategic push in the south to establish the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as a pan-India party, Mr. Modi deftly navigated the rivalry between the Congress and the CPI(M) and their alleged appeasement politics. He also leveraged the perceived anti-incumbency against the CPI (M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) government. During his campaign in north India, he made it a point to mention the bitter exchange between Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who is seeking re-election from Wayanad, and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. While Mr. Gandhi alleged that a CPI(M)-BJP nexus shielded Mr. Vijayan from Central agencies, the Chief Minister retaliated with indirect references to the 'Pappu' jibe.

At the same time, both the Congress and the CPI(M) failed to effectively capitalise on Mr. Modi's anti-Muslim rhetoric at a rally in Rajasthan.

Since the BJP-led government came to power at the Centre in 2014, the party has tactically attempted to make advances in Kerala. Through its campaign during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, it also seemed to be preparing for the 2026 Assembly elections. The BJP leadership has attempted to cement its relationship to some extent with the leadership of the Nair Service Society and the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam to win the votes of two dominant Hindu communities – the Nairs and the Ezhavas/Thiyyas.

Unlike in the past, the BJP central leadership decided not to involve the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh during electioneering, perhaps under the belief that the heightened activism of the organisation may mar the chances of its candidates in Thiruvananthapuram and Thrissur, i.e., Union Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar and actor-politician Suresh Gopi, respectively.

Simultaneously, the controversial movie, *The Kerala Story*, was aired on the national broadcaster Doordarshan. It was aimed at reigniting the so-called 'love jihad' conspiracy theory propagated by both Hindutva outfits and radical Christian groups. Soon afterwards, the Idukki Diocese, under the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, screened the movie for students. The Kerala Catholic Youth Movement unit of the Thamarassery Diocese of the Syro-Malabar Church in Kozhikode also decided to screen the movie. However, the organisers later postponed the screening for a date after the general elections, as they felt that the issue was getting overly politicised. Many believe that the timing of the decision to screen the movie was part of a wider game plan of a section of the laity and the clergy within the Catholic Church to help the BJP win over the Christian community. The party also fielded Anil K. Antony, son of Congress Working Committee member A.K. Antony, in Pathanamthitta.

During the polls, Delhi Lieutenant Governor V.K. Saxena visited Kerala to have an audience with the heads of the Syro Malabar Church, the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church, and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. This sparked a controversy, though he clarified that his visit was without any political motive.

The BJP also actively poached disgruntled leaders from the Congress and CPI(M) and tried to engineer defections from other parties. The admission of LDF convener and CPI(M) Central Committee member E.P. Jayarajan on polling day that he had met BJP Kerala in-charge Prakash Javadekar caused embarrassment to the CPI(M).

It was clear that the BJP intensified its campaign in Kerala this time. It seems confident of increasing its vote share in nearly all the 16 out of 20 seats where it contested banking on the Modi factor. But it remains uncertain on winning any seats.

The rising share of personal income tax and indirect tax is a concern

Recent data show that personal income tax collections have increased, while collections from corporate taxes have reduced

DATA POINT

Vignesh Radhakrishnan, Rebecca Rose Varghese & Rachita Rabboni

Over the last week, during the election campaign, the Congress' manifesto and the party's emphasis on social justice and welfare were suddenly thrust into the limelight. Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought to give the Congress' demand for a caste census and its plans to study distribution of surplus government land to the poor, among others, a communal turn. The Congress defended its manifesto saying the rising wealth inequality in the country needs to be addressed and dismissed Mr. Modi's claims that its plans intended to favour a particular religious group. In the midst of this political controversy, the Chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, Sam Pitroda, floated the idea of an inheritance tax, which is not in place in India and is also not mentioned in the Congress' manifesto.

Almost concurrently, the Finance Ministry released provisional data that showed an uptick in net tax collections. This is mostly driven by an increase in personal income tax and securities transaction tax collections. On the other hand, net corporate tax collections have reduced marginally. The data also show that revenues from personal income tax and securities transaction tax grew at almost double the pace compared to revenues from corporate tax last year.

We look at some numbers to provide context to the ongoing debate and the recent release of tax data. **Chart 1** shows corporate tax and personal income tax as a share of gross tax revenue, as of February every year. As can be seen from the chart, the share of corporate tax has been on a decreasing trend, while that of personal income tax has been increasing. As of February 2024, the gap between the two tax shares further increased, with income tax forming 28% of the gross tax – a new peak. The sharp fall in corporate tax after FY19 can be attributed to the deep corporate tax cuts introduced by the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government in September 2019.

The data also show that the share of direct taxes has been decreasing, while that of indirect taxes has been increasing. Direct taxes, which include taxes levied directly on the incomes of corporations and individuals, are said to be "progressive" because those who earn less are taxed less and vice-versa. On the other hand, indirect taxes, which include union excise duties and the Goods and Services Tax, are considered "regressive" as all consumers, regardless of their income levels, pay the same amount.

Chart 2 shows the share of direct and indirect taxes in the combined tax revenue receipts of the Centre and the States across years. As can be seen from the chart, the share of indirect taxes, which had been falling steadily since the 1980s, has increased in the past decade. On the other hand, the share of direct taxes, which had been increasing, has consistently recorded a downturn in recent years.

Importantly, **Chart 3** shows that a bulk of those who file personal income tax earn an annual income of ₹1 lakh-₹5 lakh. Richer individuals who earn more than ₹50 lakh are few and far between.

Moreover, a comparison with BRICS economies, for which data are available, shows that the effective personal income tax rate in India is among the highest **(Chart 4).**

Put together, the data show that poorer citizens and those in the middle-class category are increasingly shouldering a higher share of the tax burden. This is due to the combination of the rising share of personal income tax and indirect taxes in total revenue.

Taxing times

The data for the charts were sourced from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, the Controller General of Accounts, and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC)

Chart 1: The chart shows corporate tax and personal income tax as a share of gross tax revenue, as of February every year

Chart 2: The chart shows the share of direct and indirect taxes in the combined tax revenue receipts of the Centre and the States across years

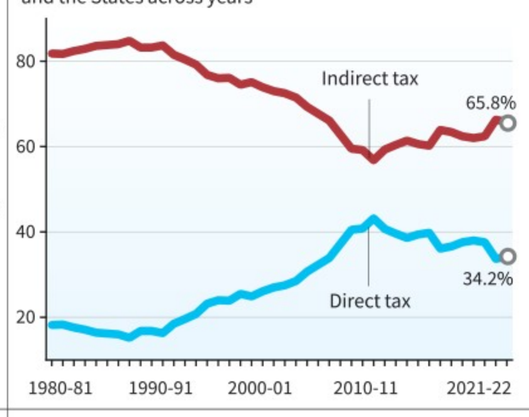


Chart 3: The chart shows the annual income bracket-wise share in total income tax returns filed and the share in total amount of income tax paid

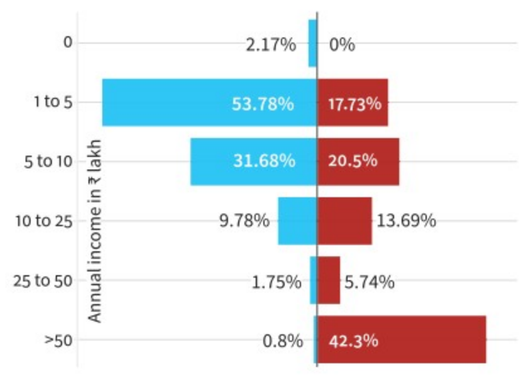
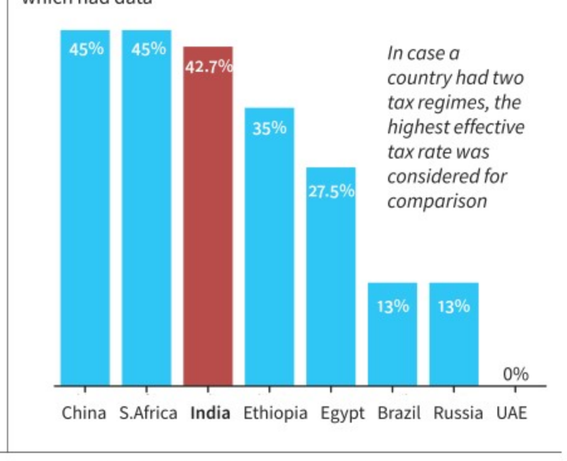


Chart 4: The chart compares the effective personal income tax rate in India with other BRICS countries which had data



Rachita Rabboni is interning with *The Hindu* Data Team

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 30, 1974

Presidential polls: Supreme Court's opinion to be got

New Delhi, April 29: The Union Government has decided to seek the opinion of the Supreme Court on whether the Presidential election due before August 24, could be held despite the dissolution of the Gujarat Legislative Assembly. An announcement to this effect was made in Parliament to-day.

The following is the text of the Law Minister's statement: "The House is aware that the term of office of the present President of India expires on August 24, 1974. Under Article 62(1) of the Constitution an election to fill a vacancy caused by the expiration of the term of office of the President is required to be completed before the expiry of the term. This House is also aware that the Gujarat State Legislative Assembly was dissolved on March 15, 1974. A question has been raised whether the election to the office of the President can be held notwithstanding the dissolution of the Gujarat Assembly. The Government is prima facie of the view that on a true and correct interpretation of Article 54, 55, 56 and 62 and 71 of the Constitution, the electoral college consists only of the elected members of such of the Legislative Assemblies of States as are in existence at or before the expiry of the term of office of the President. However, a contrary view has been expressed both inside and outside this House. Quesions of far-reaching importance have arisen as to the composition of the electoral college where Legislative Assemblies of one or more States stand dissolved and in view of the fact that a question of great public importance has arisen, the Government has decided to recommend to the President to obtain the opinion of the Supreme Court under Article 143 of the Constitution as regards the true and correct interpretation of Articles 54, 62, 71 and the relevant provisions of the Constitution so far as they concern the election of the President to fill the vacancy caused by the expiration of the term of office of the President."

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 30, 1924

Swedish match co

Stockholm, April 29: The Swedish Match Manufacturing Company has doubled its share capital to 190 million crowns. It will use the new capital to complete its factories in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, and Karachi.

From Page One

Revanth gets notice over 'doctored' video of Shah

The doctored video was reportedly posted on X by Telangana Congress on April 27. The post was not available on Monday.

Reacting to the FIR by the Delhi Police, Mr. Reddy, who was addressing a rally in Kalaburagi in Karnataka, said he was not "scared". "So far, the Enforcement Directorate, Central Bureau of Investigation and Income Tax Department were used by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Home Minister to win elections, but today I got to know that a team of Delhi Police reached the Telangana Congress's office because someone posted something on social media. They came to arrest the Telangana Congress president and the Telangana CM, this means the PM is using Delhi Police to win elections now, but we aren't scared", he said.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma posted on X that the police have arrested an individual of the State named Reetam Singh in connection with the fake video. Further, a senior police official from the Assam Police too confirmed the arrest of the 31-year-old Mr. Singh, a lawyer at the Guwahati High Court. He is currently the State War Room Coordinator of the Congress's Assam unit.

The Delhi Police lodged an FIR in the matter on Sunday, after an official of the Ministry of Home Affairs submitted a complaint about the doctored video. The FIR was registered under Sections 153 (causing provocation with intention to cause riot) , 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc), 465 (forgery), 469 (forgery to harm the reputation of any party), and 171G (publishing false statement with intent to affect the result of an election) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and under the Information Technology Act, the police said.

The Mumbai Police and Assam Police too registered cases under similar sections.

Taking a dig at Congress leaders who allegedly posted the doctored video, Mr. Modi said that those who lost elections are using technology to create fake videos and AI to spread misinformation. "I request the Election Commission to take action against those responsible," said Mr. Modi.

JD(S) set to suspend Hassan MP Prajwal

"We are demanding a comprehensive inquiry. If found guilty, we will raise our voices on behalf of women seeking punishment to the accused. Our stand is that if found guilty, he has to be punished," Mr. Kumaraswamy said while maintaining that neither Prime Minister Narendra Modi nor the BJP had anything to do with the scandal.

The BJP leaders, including State unit president B.Y. Vijayendra and former BJP general secretary C.T. Ravi, also distanced themselves from the scandal involving the candidate of its alliance partner.

Mr. Kumaraswamy has also sought the SIT investigation to include the actions of those who distributed pen drives in Hassan that have exposed the identity of the victims.

Meanwhile, JD(S) legislator from Gurmitkal Sharanagouda Kandakur is learnt to have written to the party leaders, including Mr. Deve Gowda, seeking action against the MP and highlighted the embarrassment faced by the party workers during the election campaign that is underway for the third phase of polling in 14 constituencies in north Karnataka.

Multiple teams

Meanwhile, the SIT began its probe by questioning one of the suspected victims in the case on Monday, sources said, adding that multiple teams have been assigned with specific tasks. Sources in the SIT said the big task before them was to identify the victims in the videos now being circulated.

Defamation case filed against Delhi CM and Atishi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The BJP leader Praveen Shankar Kapoor on Monday filed a defamation case against Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Cabinet Minister Atishi Marlena over poaching allegations made by the two who had said that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders were approached by the BJP to join them in return for cash. The matter is listed for hearing on May 4.

In his application in the court, Mr. Kapoor cited a social media post of Mr. Kejriwal (dated January 27) in which he had alleged that the BJP had contacted seven AAP MLAs and was offering ₹25 crore to poach them. He also cited similar claims and a press briefing by Ms. Marlena on April 2 in which she had said that she received an offer to join the BJP to "save" her "political career", failing which she would be arrested by the Enforcement Directorate.

Mr. Kapoor had sought the withdrawal of the remarks and an apology on TV and social media.

BJP, Cong. seek time to reply to EC notice on violation of code

Both parties miss the 11 a.m. deadline on Monday; the BJP has requested a week's time, while the Congress wants 14 days to submit its response

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday sought a week's time to respond to the Election Commission's notice issued to party president J.P. Nadda on complaints against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while the Congress has sought 14 more days on a similar plaint against Rahul Gandhi.

Both parties were supposed to submit their responses by 11 a.m. on Monday.

The EC sources said that the Congress had initially sought time till 5 p.m. on Monday but later asked for 14 more days.

No names of leaders

On April 25, the EC had for the first time issued a notice for violation of the Model Code of Conduct by Mr. Modi. However, taking a circuitous route, the notice

The EC issuing notices to party presidents was considered unprecedented.

was sent to Mr. Nadda and not to Mr. Modi directly. The notice failed even to mention the Prime Minister by name but the complaints attached along with it were those of the Congress, CPI(M) and so on, against Mr. Modi's "malicious election speech delivered at Banswara (Rajasthan)".

A similar notice issued to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge contained complaints against him and Mr. Gandhi. This notice, too, did not name any of the leaders.

The EC issuing the notices to the respective party presidents instead of the leaders concerned was considered unprecedented. In its notice to the BJP, the EC asked Mr. Nadda to get all the star campaigners of the party to "set high standards of political discourse and observe provisions of the model code of conduct in letter and spirit". The commission said it had decided that while individual star campaigners would continue to remain responsible for the speeches they made, the Commission would address party chiefs "on a case-to-case basis".

The poll panel also held that campaign speeches made by those holding high positions had more serious consequences.

In the notice to Mr. Kharge, the EC included complaints filed by the BJP, alleging that he and Mr. Gandhi had violated the MCC.

SC issues notice to ED on Hemant Soren's plea for interim bail

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Hemant Soren

The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren's plea for interim bail.

A Bench headed by Justice Sanjiv Khanna posted the case for the week commencing on May 6.

Meanwhile, the Bench, including Justice Dipankar Datta, gave the Jharkhand High Court liberty to pronounce judgment on Mr. Soren's petition challenging his arrest by the ED in January.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for Mr. Soren, said none of the predicate offences, including forgery or fraud, could be linked to his client. "He is not involved in any of that," Mr. Sibal said.

Justice Khanna, however, said there were allegations of proceeds of crime linked to Mr. Soren. "There is a plot of [land of] 8.5 acres," Justice Khanna said.

Mr. Soren had moved the Supreme Court on April 24, saying the High Court was not pronouncing its verdict on his plea challenging his arrest by the ED in the money laundering case. He was arrested on January 31 after he resigned as the Jharkhand Chief Minister, and party loyalist and State Transport Minister Champai Soren was named as his successor.

He was arrested after being questioned by the ED for seven hours in the case.

The ED is probing the alleged "huge amounts of proceeds of crime generated by manipulation of official records by showing dummy sellers and purchasers in the guise of forged/bogus documents to acquire huge parcels of land having value in crores".

SC asks if untainted teacher appointments in Bengal can be saved

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked if untainted appointments, among the nearly 24,000 made in 2016 by the West Bengal School Service Commission to teaching and non-teaching posts in State schools, can be salvaged.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud was hearing a petition filed by the State government against a Calcutta High Court order to terminate 23,123 teaching and non-teaching staffers *en bloc*. The government had argued that such a move would drastically affect students and put school education in the State in a quandary, that too, at the beginning of the new academic year. The education system itself may come to a standstill.

Though the Supreme Court declined to immediately stay the High Court order, it posted the case for further hearing on Monday. "The question is whether, on the basis of material available, is it possible to segregate valid and invalid appointments and who are the beneficiaries of the fraud. We see those 25,000 jobs taken away is a serious thing. Unless we see that the entire thing is fraught with fraud," the Chief Justice observed.

The Bench asked the CBI to hold its hand in an investigation into a State government decision to create conditional supernumerary posts to accommodate the teachers whose appointments were allegedly irregular.

The State had argued that even the CBI report had alleged irregularities in the recruitment of only a little over 4,000 appointments. Neither the SSC nor the CBI had ever indicated that the entire recruitment process was tainted.

The SSC had held the selection process in 2016 for assistant teachers for Classes 9 to 12 and non-teaching staff.

Mere non-cooperation with ED not a ground for arrest, Kejriwal tells SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal put up a spirited stand in the Supreme Court on Monday against his arrest in the liquor policy case, saying mere non-cooperation with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) cannot be a ground for his incarceration by the Central agency.

"My arrest came after the declaration of the Model Code of Conduct. Was I a hardened criminal or a terrorist who would run away... So, did you leave a guilty Chief Minister to roam free all these years?" senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, appearing for Mr. Kejriwal, submitted before a Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta.

'Right to not speak'

Mr. Kejriwal contended he had a right to not give an incriminating statement against himself to the ED. He invoked his fundamental right against self-incrimination under Article 20, the right to due procedure and liberty (Article 21) of the Constitution and even referred to the Magna Carta.

> My arrest came after the declaration of the Model Code of Conduct... So, did you leave a guilty Chief Minister to roam free all these years?
>
> **ARVIND KEJRIWAL**
> Delhi Chief Minister

"... I have a right to not speak against myself," Mr. Singhvi said.

Justice Khanna, at one point, asked whether Mr. Kejriwal had applied for bail in the trial court as yet. Mr. Kejriwal's petition, after all, was against both his arrest and remand.

Additional Solicitor-General S.V. Raju, for the ED, pointed out that the Chief Minister had not challenged subsequent remands. He had been remanded five times so far. He is currently in judicial custody till May 7.

"I am not saying Chief Minister has immunity, but does he have lesser rights," Mr. Singhvi queried in a retort to the ED's affidavit that "criminal" politicians did not have immunity from arrest, especially to campaign for the Lok Sabha election.

Justice Khanna wondered if Mr. Singhvi was saying that an arresting authority ought to objectively weigh factors both for and against a person before arrest. The power to arrest did not necessarily mean an obligation to arrest, Mr. Singhvi replied. The ED's power to summon under Section 50 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) did not inherently include the power to arrest under Section 19 of the law, Mr. Singhvi noted. He said arrest should be based on material in the possession of the ED which gave it reason to believe that the person was guilty of an offence punishable under the PMLA.

"... Can the ED say 'you did not come' and that by itself is grounds for holding you guilty and arresting you under Section 19?" Mr. Singhvi asked.

"I was arrested the day I was unable to get interim protection from the Delhi High Court. You [ED] came to my house and spent 10 hours, then arrested me. The ground for arrest should be positive and inculpatory, not because I was unable to get protection or I did not cooperate. Where is the 'reason to believe', where is the material in your [ED] possession?" Mr. Singhvi challenged.

Arguments would continue on Tuesday.

Why is Bengal govt. opposing CBI probe, asks top court

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked why West Bengal has come to the court objecting to the Central Bureau of Investigation probe into allegations of sexual assault and land grabbing from Sandeshkhali by Shahjahan Sheikh.

"Why should the State come here in this case," Justice B.R. Gavai asked the West Bengal government, represented by senior advocates A.M. Singhvi and Jaideep Gupta. Mr. Gupta said there were remarks made by the Calcutta High Court against the State. "So you go and get that expunged in the High Court..." Justice Sandeep Mehta said.

Why is Prime Minister silent on Prajwal Revanna, asks Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP, accusing them of fielding Prajwal Revanna – JD(S) MP and grandson of party supremo H.D. Deve Gowda – from the Hassan Lok Sabha constituency, despite being informed by the Karnataka BJP leaders about his sexual misconduct.

The JD(S) is fighting the Lok Sabha election in Karnataka in alliance with the BJP.

A case has been registered in the State against Mr. Prajwal and his father H.D. Revanna, after a domestic help at their household filed a complaint. She alleged that four months after she started working for them, Mr. Revanna used to sexually harass her, and Mr. Prajwal used to make video calls to her daughter and have "vulgar conversations" with her.

Public outrage: Congress supporters protesting against Prajwal Revanna, in Bengaluru on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

In a post in Hindi on X, the Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said, "The leader with whom the PM gets photographed by placing his hand on his shoulder. The leader for whom the PM himself campaigned 10 days ago. Today, that leader of Karnataka is absconding from the country." Mr. Prajwal is said to have left for Germany a few days back. "This ruined the lives of hundreds of women. Modi*ji*, will you still remain silent?" Ms. Vadra said.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said that in December 2023 itself, a BJP leader had informed [the party] about the "atrocities of Prajwal Revanna". "... This is not surprising. Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, Kuldeep Sengar and now Prajwal Revanna – the Prime Minister has shown his true face time and again," Mr. Ramesh said in a post in Hindi on X.

"These women are domestic workers, and party workers, MPs, and their lives have been destroyed by him. One of the videos shows how a 63-year-old woman, old enough to be his mother or grandmother, is seen pleading to him," the Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate said.

NCW says 'no information' on the political affiliation of its Chairperson, Members

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has said it has no information on whether its Chairperson and Members are members of any political party.

Replying to a query under the Right to Information Act, 2005, the Public Information Officer (PIO) replied that the NCW was a statutory body set up under the NCW Act, 1990, by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The Chairperson and Members of the Commission are nominated by the government of India.

To specific questions, which also included one on whether the Chairperson and Members could participate in political meetings, and if they should not, then what legal and other action could be taken against them, the PIO replied, "From the records in this office, no such information is available."

The Chairperson and Members of the Commission are nominated by the Government of India

The petitioner Raj Kapil said that in the last year he had been witnessing one of the NCW Members attending political party events of the BJP. At the time of nomination to the NCW, she was serving as a member of the BJP's national executive committee.

The NCW had the responsibility to evaluate the progress of the development of women under the Union and State governments. "With this being the mandate, the Chairperson or Member should not be a member of any political party, at least for the term of office to uphold the principle of neutrality and serving without any fear or favour," he said. Mr. Kapil said the NCW's reply stating that "no information is available" would only lead to larger questions on transparency and accountability directly, casting aspersions on the decisions and whether they were serving without political bias.

ELECTIONS 2024

Apologise for failing Pandits: NC candidate

National Conference candidate Aga Ruhullah Mehdi, contesting the Srinagar-Budgam seat, on Monday apologised to Kashmiri Pandits for the party's failure to stop their migration in the wake of growing militancy in the 1990s. "It was the grim and beyond-control situation that drove Kashmiri Pandits away from Kashmir and not us. Those were very tumultuous times. The guns that murdered you, murdered us too. We were as helpless as you were. Still, I think we (NC) could not find a way to save and stop the migration of Pandits. I apologise for that," Mr. Mehdi, whose father was killed in a militant attack in 2000, said. He said the NC wanted to see "a dignified return of Kashmiri Pandits to the place of origin".

National Conference candidate Aga Ruhullah Mehdi during a rally in Srinagar. PTI

Lalu's daughter files nomination from Saran

Rohini Acharya, daughter of Rashtriya Janata Dal chief Lalu Prasad, filed her nomination papers on Monday from the Saran seat.

She was accompanied by Mr. Prasad, her mother Rabri Devi, eldest sister Misa Bharti and two of her brothers, former Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav and Tej Pratap Yadav, MLA.

Appealing to people, Ms. Acharya said, "After roaming the entire constituency, I have understood the problem and issues over here. I have left all the facilities which I was getting abroad and have come here to make Saran a beautiful, developed and modern constituency. Like a mother taking care of the family members, I will take care of this constituency."

Saran will go to the polls on May 20.

> Is Rahul on bail or not? Is Sonia on bail or not? All these people are on bail. P. Chidambaram, Karthi Chidambaram, Lalu Yadav, all are on bail

J.P. NADDA
BJP president

Jailed AIP leader files papers for Baramulla seat

Abdul Rashid Sheikh, head of the Awami-e-Ittihad Party who is in prison, on Monday filed nomination papers through his representative from the Baramulla seat. The AIP has named his son, Abrar Rashid, as the covering candidate for the nominated candidate.

> BJP leaders are saying they will change the Constitution, which protects the poor. Modi wants only 22-25 people to control all wealth and resources

RAHUL GANDHI
Congress leader

NCP (Ajit faction) leader Chhagan Bhujbal says the *Mahayuthi* may even go down a few seats from the last time but we will get the largest share. FILE PHOTO

Not a cakewalk for BJP but people will choose Modi again: Bhujbal

Nistula Hebbar
NASHIK

Senior Nationalist Congress Party leader (Ajit Pawar faction) Chhagan Bhujbal says that while the BJP and the *Mahayuthi* ruling coalition in Maharashtra will not find the election in the State a cakewalk, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will still have an advantage in forming the government at the Centre.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Bhujbal said while it was true that this time around, with the split in the NCP and the Shiv Sena, and with six parties ranged against each other in two alliances, it was difficult to gauge what the people may be thinking, a national election would still gave Mr. Modi the advantage.

"While people are attending political meetings of this leader and that, they do come around to the view that this is an election to elect the Prime Minister of the country, who should be strong and who should be able to navigate what is going on internationally, be it Russia-Ukraine or West Asia. That gives Prime Minister Modi an undeniable advantage as the INDIA group is not united across the country," he said.

"In Maharashtra, it is not as though the BJP has a cakewalk as it was in 2014 and 2019, but it is also not the case that the Opposition parties will be able to dominate. The BJP and the Mahayuthi will have to work hard, and we may even go down a few seats from the last time, we will get the largest share," he said.

Mr. Bhujbal met *The Hindu* in Nashik, where he was first tipped to contest but later withdrew from the fray, sowing doubts about dissension in the ranks of the *Mahayuthi*. He said that he had been sounded out to contest by senior leaders of the alliance, around a month ago, and at that time, he had been advocating for his nephew, former MP Sameer Bhujbal. Soon after, he started preparations to contest. "But list after list has come out without my name, with news that the Shiv Sena (Shinde) was negotiating to hold on to the seat, and I felt humiliated, which is why I publicly withdrew from the contest," he said.

Being considered for the seat but followed later by procrastination, he feels, owes also to the feeling that there is a "Maratha versus all" type of contest developing in the State, with confusion among parties over how to deal with the situation in the light of the Maratha quota agitation led by Manoj Jarange-Patil.

"Whatever happened during the Maratha agitation, their striving for cutting into the OBC reservations, the violence that happened during the agitation, has created this situation. Some non-Maratha sections of the population feel why is it that only Marathas will get leadership roles, own sugar factories, dominate cooperative banks and milk cooperatives, and others are kept out," Mr. Bhujbal said.

Successive governments, he said, had striven to address the issue, but Mr. Patil's agitation "was a bit much" due to his insistence that the Maratha quota should be carved out of the existing OBC quota, a demand rejected by four commissions and later the Supreme Court, he added.

Rift in INDIA bloc comes to fore in Bengal ahead of third phase

Mamata has been saying there is no INDIA tie-up in West Bengal and that the Left and Congress have been working for BJP; four constituencies in one of the most economically backward regions of the State are going to the polls on May 7

OVERVIEW

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The schism in the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) in West Bengal has become more pronounced ahead of the third phase of the Lok Sabha election in which four constituencies in the central region of the State go to the polls.

Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee, who had participated in a few meetings of the INDIA bloc and had claimed to have given the name to the alliance, finally decided to field candidates from all the 42 Lok Sabha constituencies in the State.

She blamed the Congress for not being able to reach an electoral understanding.

During her campaign, Ms. Banerjee has been saying there is no INDIA bloc in West Bengal and the Left parties and the Congress have been working for the BJP.

The Congress, led by Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, and the Communist Party of India (M), led by Mohammad Salim, are not sparing an opportunity to target the Chief Minister and her government either.

Past results

Here's a look at the 2019 Lok Sabha election results for the four key constituencies in West Bengal that will go to the polls on May 7

Constituency	Parties	Vote Share (in %)
Malda Uttar	BJP	37.61
	Trinamool Congress	31.39
Malda Dakshin	Congress	34.73
	BJP	34.09
Jangipur	Trinamool Congress	43.15
	BJP	24.3
Murshidabad	Trinamool Congress	41.57
	Congress	26

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addressing a rally in Murshidabad. PTI

At a rally in Murshidabad's Domkal, Mr. Salim, while sharing the stage with Mr. Chowdhury, vowed to drag the Chief Minister out of the State Secretariat in the 2026 Assembly election.

Minority voters

The region has a distinct geography and demography, and the issues are constituency-specific. Both Malda and Murshidabad districts have a significant minority population and the Trinamool, the Left and the Congress leadership want to win the support of the Muslim community.

The BJP is hoping that a split in the Muslim vote and a polarisation of voters will help the party.

Out of the four constituencies, the BJP had won Malda Uttar, the Congress had wrested Malda Dakshin and the Trinamool had won Jangipur and Murshidabad in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. This time, the BJP has launched a high-pitched campaign not only in Malda but also in Murshidabad district. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah have campaigned in Malda, while BJP president J.P. Nadda has held rallies in Murshidabad.

Ms. Banerjee and Trinamool general secretary Abhishek Banerjee are campaigning extensively in the region.

These constituencies have thrown up interesting battles. The CPI(M)'s Mr. Salim is contesting from Murshidabad against sitting MP Abu Taher Khan of the Trinamool. In Jangipur, sitting MP and bidi baron Khalilur Rahaman, is pitted against Congress candidate Mohammad Murtaza Hossain, grandson of Congress leader Abu Hena.

In Malda Dakshin, Congress candidate Isha Khan Chowdhury is defending his family bastion. His father, Abu Hasem Khan Chowdhury, had represented the constituency since 2006, and prior to this, his uncle, the late A.B.A. Ghani Khan Chowdhury, was the MP.

The Congress candidate is facing the Trinamool's Shahnawaj Ali Raihan, a scholar from Oxford, and the BJP has fielded English Bazaar MLA Sreerupa Mitra Chowdhury.

Malda Uttar will see a fight between sitting BJP MP Khagen Murmu and former IPS officer and Trinamool candidate Prasun Banerjee.

The region is one of the economically most backward regions of the State, with millions of youth migrating in search of work. While men move to the States in the south and in the north for higher wages, women roll bidis to add to their income.

The districts have also borne the brunt of river erosion that has left thousands of people homeless and the State losing about 200 square kilometres of land in the past several decades. Like the previous elections, politicians both in power at the Centre and in the State are giving assurances to the migrants and to the people affected by river erosion that they will take concrete steps after the election.

CAA-NRC issue

Another key issue that has dominated the election campaign is the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. The Trinamool leadership, including the Chief Minister, has been highlighting that the CAA and the Rules notified in March are a precursor to the National Register of Citizens and aimed at sending "Muslims to camps".

While the region was considered a Congress bastion, the Trinamool swept the Assembly election in 2021 on the issue of the CAA-NRC.

The Left-Congress leadership claims that the "CAA is an attempt to create a political binary of BJP-Trinamool" and will not have an impact on the electorate of the region in the Lok Sabha election.

Rajnath Singh

Rajnath files nomination papers for Lucknow seat

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

Union Minister and senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh on Monday filed his nomination papers from the Lucknow constituency, seeking a third consecutive term from the seat.

Mr. Singh led a roadshow from the State BJP office to the Lucknow Collectorate, along with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, and U.P. Deputy Chief Ministers Brajesh Pathak and Keshav Prasad Maurya, among other senior leaders. Mr. Singh, a former BJP president, expressed gratitude to the people for turning up in record numbers for the roadshow.

"I have filed my nomination papers from the Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency today. I have received love and blessings from the people of Lucknow. The blessings of the people give me energy and inspiration to serve the country and society," Mr. Singh posted on social media platform X after filing the nomination.

Cong. names four more candidates for Punjab

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

The Congress on Monday declared four more candidates for the Lok Sabha election in Punjab, fielding State party chief Amarinder Singh Raja Warring from Ludhiana.

With this list, the party has announced candidates for 12 of the total 13 seats in Punjab that go to the polls on June 1.

Apart from the party's State president, the other candidates include Sukhjinder Randhawa, the party's MLA from the Dera Baba Nanak segment, who will contest from the Gurdaspur seat, which is currently represented by Sunny Deol.

It has named former Cabinet Minister Vijay Inder Singla from Anandpur Sahib, where the SAD's Prem Singh Chandumajra and the AAP's Malvinder Singh Kang are in the race.

Congress MLA Kulbir Zira has been fielded from Khadoor Sahib.

Stage set for three-way tussle in Anantnag-Rajouri even as EC considers request to defer election

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The election to the Anantnag-Rajouri seat on May 7 will be the most-watched election in Jammu and Kashmir for its intrigues, suspense, and drama.

Fast slipping into a complex political drama, the election will witness a triangular contest in the constituency layered with a complex voter demography, comprising Kashmiri speakers, Gujjars, Bakerwals, and Paharis.

National Conference (NC) candidate Mian Altaf, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidate Mehbooba Mufti, and J&K Apni Party candidate Zaffar Manhas – who is likely to get support from the absent parties like the BJP and the J&K Peoples Conference – are the main contestants.

So far, the poll narrative of the NC and the PDP has revolved around the BJP, a party which is not contesting the seat. Both the PDP and the NC accused the BJP of "assault on Kashmiri identity, special status, and natural resources".

Riveting contest: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti during an election rally for the Lok Sabha polls, in Anantnag on Monday. PTI

However, the BJP is joining multiple political forces to seek postponement of elections in Anantnag, citing concerns over weather and voter accessibility due to the current spell of rainfall. It keeps the door ajar for the BJP, and the party's re-entry cannot be ruled out in case the Election Commission (EC) heeds the request.

The Anantnag-Rajouri constituency is the only seat the BJP believes could be its gateway into the once-no-go area of the Kashmir Valley. The party has focused on several tribes of the Rajouri-Poonch region of the Pir Panjal Valley in the past five years to reap electoral gains, especially after it scrapped the special status of J&K in 2019.

Several BJP leaders from the Kashmir valley, in a joint letter to the party high command, pressed for fielding candidates from the three seats in Kashmir. However, Union Home Minister Amit Shah silenced the demand, saying "the party is into winning the hearts of the people in Kashmir before the lotus will bloom there".

The BJP faces a political dilemma. There is fear of polarisation and consolidation of Muslim votes. Also, the BJP's stated political goal in Kashmir remains to see a non-Abdullah and non-Mufti MP, especially from Anantnag. It can only be achieved by supporting other players in Kashmir.

The election has also pitted the NC and the PDP, former allies of the People's Alliance for the Gupkar Declaration, against each other. The Gupkar alliance, formed on August 4, 2019, pledged to fight jointly for the restoration of the pre-August 5, 2019 position of J&K, seeking restoration of special status. However, the hardening position of the NC to retain the Anantnag seat pushed the PDP away from any electoral alliance within the INDIA bloc.

For Ms. Mufti, Anantnag is the hometown of the Muftis and the party, as most of her leaders come from south Kashmir. The NC, on the other hand, sees it as an opportune time to reclaim south Kashmir from the PDP, which saw an exodus of leaders after 2019. Ms. Mufti's image and political future is at stake. The NC's poll prospects for the upcoming Assembly polls also hinge on the seat.

Anantnag-Rajouri is a newly carved out constituency. In 2022, the J&K Delimitation Commission stitched together geographically disjointed regions of Rajouri and Poonch of the Pir Panjal valley and Anantnag-Shopian-Kulgam of the Kashmir Valley and recast the voter demographics.

This forced the NC to field Mr. Altaf, a popular and well-respected Gujjar leader and spiritual guru, from Anantnag. Ms. Mufti too is reaching out to tribal people and banks on the goodwill generated for her stand over the rape and murder of a Gujjar girl in 2018 and her street protests against eviction of Gujjars and Bakerwals from forest land after 2019.

J&K Apni Party candidate Manhas is a Pahari and banks on the support from the BJP.

INBRIEF

Amit Shah takes jibe at INDIA bloc for not having a PM face

BJP leader and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday targeted the INDIA bloc for not having a prime ministerial candidate. Praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his leadership qualities, Mr. Shah, at a rally in Madhubani, Bihar, lashed out at the alliance saying the country did not need helpless leadership but required a strong leader. He asserted that Mr. Modi's victory was certain. "However, if it happens in the dream and the INDI alliance comes to power, who will be the PM of the country. Do they have any leader? God forbid, if the INDI alliance comes to power, they will share the PM's post for one year each," he said.

'Ranting' by Rahul and Nadda has no impact in Odisha: BJD

The Biju Janata Dal has reacted sharply to its criticism by Bharatiya Janata Party president J.P. Nadda and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, saying their 'ranting' would not have any impact on the electoral outcome in Odisha. "Mr. Gandhi visited Odisha on Sunday and addressed an election rally in Salepur in Cuttack district. His visit will not have any impact on the electoral fortunes of Odisha Congress," said Sasmit Patra, BJD's national spokesperson here. Mr. Patra, on a sarcastic note, said it would surely motivate the demotivated Congress cadre, which had been losing elections consistently.

Hemant Soren's wife Kalpana files her papers for byelection

Kalpana Murmu Soren, wife of jailed former Chief Minister Hemant Soren, on Monday filed her nomination from the Gandey Assembly constituency as Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) candidate for which a bypoll is scheduled on May 20 along with Lok Sabha polling for the fifth phase. The seat in Giridih district fell vacant after resignation of JMM MLA Sarfaraz Ahmad, who is now Rajya Sabha member. Several senior leaders, including JMM leader and Chief Minister Champai Soren, were present. After submitting her papers, she addressed a public meeting at Paparwatand Sports ground in Giridih in the presence of party founder Shibu Soren.

'Delaying polling in Anantnag will harm EC's credibility'

Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader M.Y. Tarigami on Monday warned against postponing the election in the Anantnag-Baramulla constituency, saying that such a step will "harm the electoral process in Jammu and Kashmir as well as the credibility of Election Commission". "Some parties have requested the ECI to postpone polls in Anantnag-Rajouri seat. I feel this is a baseless demand. Such steps will harm the electoral process in J&K," Mr. Tarigami said, adding that the BJP and some parties, which are not fighting elections, were hatching a conspiracy to reschedule polls by citing the poor state of the Mughal Road area. Anantnag is scheduled to vote on May 7.

Canada envoy summoned over slogans in public meet

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Monday summoned the Canadian Deputy High Commissioner and lodged a "strong protest" after pro-Khalistan slogans were raised at a public meeting attended by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

At the event attended by Mr. Trudeau, he was heard saying that the Canadian government will support right to religion of the Sikh community in his country without "discrimination". The rally featured at least one poster that blamed the Indian leadership for the June 2023 murder of pro-Khalistan leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was slain by unknown assassins in British Columbia.

"The Government of India's deep concern and strong protest was conveyed at such disturbing actions being allowed to continue unchecked at the event," said the MEA in a press release.

The message was delivered on the day a news report revealed the name of a R&AW officer alleging his involvement in plotting the assassination of pro-Khalistan advocate Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

PM says Congress, INDIA bloc conspiring to 'steal' quotas

Narendra Modi accuses Congress of being 'blinded' by vote bank politics, dividing the nation along religious lines; he warns that these 'forces' are trying to do something big to disrupt harmony

Shoumojit Banerjee
PUNE

Launching a campaign blitz across western Maharashtra on Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi provocatively accused the Opposition Congress and the INDIA bloc of hatching a conspiracy to aggravate social tensions. He also accused the Opposition of wanting to "steal" the reservation of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) to hand them over to Muslims in an act of political appeasement.

The thrust of Mr. Modi's addresses in Solapur, Satara, and at the mega rally in Pune was that the Congress, "blinded" by vote bank politics, was reportedly dividing the country along religious lines. The PM launched broadsides on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Nationalist Congress Party (SP) chief Sharad Pawar, dubbing Mr. Gandhi's ideas as "dangerous" while calling the 83-year-old Mr. Pawar a "roving spirit" who was responsible for Maharashtra's chronic political instability.

Reservation row: The PM felicitated by Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde and Deputy CMs Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar. ANI

Alluding to the Congress and the INDIA bloc, he said: "Those people who cannot challenge the Bharatiya Janata Party and the National Democratic Alliance head-on are now spreading fake videos on social media. By using Artificial Intelligence, statements that we would never have imagined of are being spread through our fake voices... sometimes in my voice, sometimes in Amit Shah or J.P. Nadda's voice, and sometimes in the voices of our Chief Ministers [NDA CMs]. These people are deliberately trying to create a social conflagration and are hatching a conspiracy to aggravate social tensions."

Mr. Modi warned that in the coming days, these "forces" were trying to do "something big" in the country by way of disrupting social harmony. He requested the Election Commission to take stern action against those who were spreading such deepfake videos.

The PM lashed out at the Congress and Mr. Gandhi for reportedly attempting to snatch the reservation given to Dalits, Adivasis, and OBCs in order to redirect them towards Muslims.

"You will be astonished with what the Congress is planning. The Constitution strictly forbids giving reservation along religious lines. After the SC rapped the Congress on this count, they have developed this 'Karnataka model' wherein overnight they took out a *fatwa* and made all Muslims into OBCs, snatching the latter's 27% quota and leaving the OBCs in limbo," he said, accusing the Congress of trying to tamper with Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Constitution and then deploy the tweaked Constitution across the country.

"But the Congress and INDIA bloc should beware that as long as Modi is alive, as long as the public's blessings are with me, I will foil all your efforts at changing the Constitution in the name of religion," Mr. Modi said.

In a blistering attack on Sharad Pawar, Mr. Modi said there were "some roving spirits" who keep upsetting not just the Opposition party but also cause disturbance within his party and his family.

Cong. in M.P. left red-faced as candidate joins BJP

Mehul Malpani
ASHOK NAGAR (M.P.)

In a major blow to the Congress in Madhya Pradesh before the third phase of polling, the party's candidate from Indore, Akshay Kanti Bam, on Monday withdrew his nomination and joined the Bharatiya Janata Party.

After court diktat

The move, which gave the BJP candidate and sitting MP Shankar Lalwani a virtual walkover, comes just days after a local court issued directions to add Indian Penal Code Section 307 (attempt to murder) in a land dispute case from 2007 against Mr. Bam and his father.

The turn of events was slammed by the Congress as the Opposition party alleged that democracy in the country was "under threat".

Earlier in the day, Mr. Bam, accompanied by BJP MLA Ramesh Mendola, went to the Returning Officer's office to take back his nomination form. Monday was the last day to withdraw the nominations for the third phase. After joining the BJP, Mr. Bam said that he took the decision in the national interest and for *Sanatana Dharma*.

Biren says 'unnatural growth' in population of Chin-Kuki-Zo tribes

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Amid the ongoing ethnic conflict in Manipur, Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on Monday posted a thread on X, along with a video, which claimed that there had been "unnatural growth" in the population of "Chin-Kuki-Zo" tribes in the State.

Mr. Singh said this was a threat to the "indigenous people and national security".

The Chief Minister compared the deportation of illegal immigrants by his government and the Union Home Ministry with the Rishi Sunak-led U.K. government's "unyielding commitment" to do the same, questioning "certain sections of people" for calling his government "communal" when it was only "asserting" itself on the issue as the British PM did.

The remarks came just as the State witnessed a fresh spate of violence in the past 72 hours, during which unidentified militants attacked a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) camp in Bishnupur district, killing two security personnel. Gunfight along the buffer zone between Kangpokpi and Imphal West districts led to the killing of one more person.

The conflict that began on May 3, 2023 has killed over 220 people so far, with thousands injured and tens of thousands internally displaced.

Mr. Singh went on to claim that there had been an "unnatural" growth in the number of new villages, with the video alluding to such growth spurts in Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, Tengnoupal, Kamjong, and Chandel.

Warming of Indian Ocean set to accelerate: study

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

From 1950 to 2020, the Indian Ocean had become warmer by 1.2 degrees Celsius, and climate models expect it to heat up a further 1.7 degrees Celsius to 3.8 degrees Celsius from 2020 to 2100. While we are familiar with heatwaves on land, "marine heatwaves", their counterparts in the sea and linked to the rapid formation of cyclones, are expected to increase tenfold from the current average of 20 days per year to 220-250 days per year.

Mostly attributable to global warming, the tropical Indian Ocean will likely be in a "near-permanent heatwave state" and accelerate coral bleaching, seagrass destruction, and loss of kelp forests, affecting the fisheries sector adversely, said an analysis led by scientists at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune.

The tropical Indian Ocean will likely be in a 'near-permanent heatwave state'. FILE PHOTO

'One Hiroshima bomb'

The heating of the ocean was not merely restricted to the surface but went deeper and increased the overall "heat content" of the ocean. The heat content of the Indian Ocean, when measured from surface to a depth of 2,000 metres, is currently increasing at the rate of 4.5 zetta-joules per decade, and is predicted to increase at a rate of 16-22 zetta-joules per decade in the future. Joule is a unit of energy and one zetta-joule is equal to one billion-trillion joules (10^21). "The future increase in heat content is comparable to adding the energy equivalent of one Hiroshima atomic bomb detonation every second, all day, every day, for a decade," said Roxy Mathew-Koll, scientist at IITM and lead author of the study.

The study constitutes a chapter in a forthcoming publication *The Indian Ocean and its role in the global climate system* by Elsevier.

Rising heat content contributes to sea-level rise also. Heat causes the volume of water to increase, called the thermal expansion of water, and this is responsible for more than half of the sea-level rise in the Indian Ocean – larger than the changes arising from glacier and sea-ice melting.

14 Patanjali products lose licence in Uttarakhand

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

The Uttarakhand government on Monday informed the Supreme Court that it has suspended the licences of 14 products sold by Patanjali Ayurved and Divya Pharmacy with immediate effect. The declaration came with an apology by the State Licensing Authority (SLA) along with a promise that it would commit no deliberate act to disobey the court's orders.

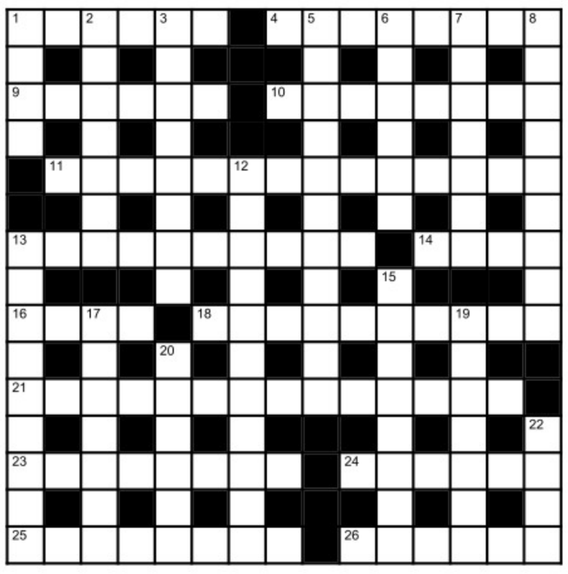
An affidavit, filed through Dr. Mithilesh Kumar, SLA joint director, Ayurvedic and Unani Services, said in an order issued on April 15 that the suspension took place for repeated violations of regulations, mainly concerning misleading advertisements, under Rule 159(1) of The Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945.

TH CROSSWORD + 14162

(set by Avtaar)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Stunned by Queen's single (6)
4 Coach and I capably overcome disability (8)
9 Murderer's introduction in suspense film (6)
10 They are extremely frugal, singular characters around the banks of Amazon (8)
11 Balanced diet? (4,10)
13 Old poem featuring exhausted parlour maid dropping off regularly, is excessively stretched (10)
14 One of five in a litter of horses, discovered (4)
16 Mountain spewing Uranium chokes island nation (4)
18 Group of relatives fly Emirates mostly, when travelling (6,4)
21 Recorded delivery by agitated deer after tigers dispersed near camp (10,4)
23 Flyers making short trips from half a dozen courtyards on the return journey (3,5)
24 Absorbing cricket match - openers from Zimbabwe, African champions, belt high above (6)
25 Scenes from Sci-Fi movie inspired by cheats (8)
26 Empty wagon haunted by very troubled monster (6)

Down

1 Staff skipping college for noon meal (4)
2 Guarantee by Avtaar - not small amount (7)
3 Stir fresh greens with bits of Indian eggplant (8)
5 Name every local heading out, carrying protective gear (11)
6 Rear entrance to access Lord's ground (6)
7 Gas and water for the French manor (7)
8 Was, perhaps, father nervous about street being evacuated? (4,5)
12 Exposing edges, bird, say, is placing shoots one over the other (3,8)
13 Baker's deliveries (3-6)
15 Extremely scratchy mandolin at the start affected musical performance (8)
17 Judge got upset with corrupt routine (3,4)
19 Do Pranayama on top of church (7)
20 Demand by revolutionary group to return soldier in East Africa (6)
22 Saint John's study (4)

SUDOKU

3	7							2
			3					
	4		2			3	7	
4			8	5	9			
	2						9	
			1	2	7			6
	9	2			5		4	
					6			
8							1	5

No.SS6144 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to previous puzzle

	S	U	B	T	L	E		S	C	A	L	A	R	
	P		O		E				O		I		U	
M	O	D	U	L	U	S		E	N	D	M	O	S	T
	U		N		C		S		I		E		T	
S	T	O	C	H	A	S	T	I	C		A	X	I	S
			E		E		I				D		C	
	F	O	R	U	M		C	O	P	P	E	R	A	S
	A				I		K		R				T	
A	C	C	U	R	A	C	Y		I	S	S	U	E	
	T		N				E		M		T			
R	O	O	T		C	O	N	T	I	N	U	O	U	S
	R		W		H		D		T		D		N	
D	I	V	I	S	O	R		K	I	N	E	T	I	C
	N		S		S				V		N		T	
	G	A	T	H	E	R		B	E	E	T	L	E	

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

1	4	9	6	5	7	2	3	8
6	3	5	2	4	8	1	7	9
2	8	7	1	9	3	4	6	5
7	5	1	8	3	4	9	2	6
4	2	3	9	6	5	8	1	7
8	9	6	7	1	2	5	4	3
3	7	2	4	8	9	6	5	1
5	1	8	3	2	6	7	9	4
9	6	4	5	7	1	3	8	2

FAITH

Divine grace of Sita

The divine grace of Goddess Mahalakshmi abounds, and in Her manifestation as Sita, she displays the same. Smt. Prabha Senesh, in a discourse, cited multiple instances of the Goddess extending grace even to demonesses. When Surpanaka pounced on Sita, at the command of Rama, Lakshmana maimed Surpanaka's nose and let her off. The same Rama had killed Thataka before at the instance of sage Viswamithra. (The presence of) Sita was a saviour to Surpanaka.

Ravana came to Asokavanam with a few women to threaten Sita. Sita's advice then relieved the demonesses.

Trijata, Visbhishana's daughter, developed saner thoughts with Sita's blessings. Though the women in Asokavanam disturbed and gave Sita all the trouble, she decided to extend asylum to them.

They fell unconscious when Indrajit tied Rama and Lakshmana with Nagastra. Trijata, Sita's well-wisher, said it was a gimmick of Ravana and pacified Sita that Rama and Lakshmana were still alive. Sita poured her love and affection on Trijata.

After Ravana's death, Hanuman wanted to kill the demonesses who inflicted multiple torments on Sita, but she prevented Hamuman out of sheer compassion. All the women became elated.

INBRIEF

Tata, South Indian Bank in tie-up to offer finance for CVs

Tata Motors on Monday said it had tied up with South Indian Bank to offer financing solutions to its commercial vehicle customers and dealerships. As part of the MoU, South Indian Bank will offer financing solutions across the auto major's entire commercial vehicle portfolio, Tata Motors said in a statement. "Our alliance aims to empower fleet owners and dealerships to achieve their business goals," Rajesh Kaul, Commercial Vehicles VP & Business Head Trucks, said. PTI

Honeywell bags supply order for jet propulsion sensors

Tech firm Honeywell on Monday said it had been selected by Lilium, the developer of the first all-electric vertical take off and landing (eVTOL) jet, to supply propulsion unit position sensors (resolvers) for the Lilium jet. These sensors will play a critical role in accurately sensing the engine's position, ensuring that the jet can safely reach the exact position required for a successful take off, Honeywell said. Honeywell is an investor in Lilium and supplies key components.

Indegene fixes IPO price band at ₹430-452 per share

Indegene, a digital-first commercialisation company focused on the global life sciences industry, has announced to open its IPO on May 6. The offer will close on May 8. The price band has been fixed from ₹430 per equity share to ₹452 per share. Bids can be made for a minimum of 33 shares and in multiples of 33 shares thereafter. The offer comprises fresh issue of equity shares aggregating up to ₹760 crore and an offer for sale of up to 2,39,32,732 shares.

'Don't take strong services exports story for granted'

Goldman Sachs projects $800 billion of exports by 2030, but flags concerns about challenges such as the lack of skilled talent and the resource stress in key hubs like the water crisis in Bengaluru

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

While India's services exports had grown six-fold between 2005 and 2023 to about $340 billion and were potentially poised to hit the $800-billion mark in 2030, Goldman Sachs cautioned against complacency citing challenges such as the lack of skilled talent and resource stress in key hubs like Bengaluru.

Goldman forecast services exports would reach 11% of GDP by 2030, from 9.7% in 2023, and if commodity prices and goods trade balances did not move much, this will help limit current account deficit to an average of 1% GDP between 2024 and 2030.

Growth challenges

India's services exports potentially poised to surpass $800 bn in 2030, from about $340 bn in 2023, says Goldman Sachs

- If commodity prices, goods trade balances don't move much, CAD may be limited to average about 1% of GDP between 2024 and 2030
- Cites training technology graduates as fit for the job market as a major challenge

- Flags pressure on the natural resources of key cities from growth as another concern

Despite resilient growth in IT services and the opportunity from Global Capability Centres, it would be prudent not to take services export growth for granted, Goldman said. "In terms of domestic constraints, training technology graduates as fit for the job market has been cited as a challenge," it noted.

"Growth in these sectors is putting pressure on the natural resources of cities... Bengaluru, which has the largest share of IT" firms was facing a water crisis, Goldman observed.

GDP growth may surpass 7% this year, says NCAER

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India's GDP growth could surpass the central bank's 7% estimate for 2024-25, the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) said on Monday, citing the forecast of an above-normal monsoon this year as well as upgraded hopes for global growth and trade volumes.

Stating that high-frequency indicators had done well over March and April, NCAER director general Poonam Gupta said the monsoon forecast augurs well for the immediate future and the more benign global outlook projected by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organisation (WTO) bode well for the Indian economy during the current year.

"The projected acceleration in both global growth and trade volumes as well as forecast of an above normal monsoon indicate that the Indian economy can again attain growth rates higher than 7% during the current fiscal year," she said. In its latest World Economic Outlook, the IMF has upgraded global growth to 3.2% for 2024 and 2025, while WTO had recently projected that world merchandise trade volumes would rise 2.6% this year after a 1.2% slippage in 2023.

The NCAER noted in its monthly review of the economy that indicators such as GST collections and digital payments showed resilience in March.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	MONDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	74,671	1.28
US Dollar	83.45	-0.08
Gold	72,750	-0.13
Brent oil	88.59	–

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3081.20	0.80
Adani Ports	1317.25	-7.35
Apollo Hosp	5968.35	-290.25
Asian Paints	2868.20	24.05
Axis Bank	1159.25	28.95
Bajaj Auto	8760.10	-214.20
Bajaj Finserv	1595.65	-1.70
Bajaj Finance	6826.60	95.40
Bharti Airtel	1332.45	6.45
BPCL	618.80	9.35
Britannia Ind	4799.85	-0.60
Cipla	1408.00	-1.15
Coal India	453.25	-2.55
Divis Lab	3989.25	-27.10
Dr Reddys Lab	6297.10	45.00
Eicher Motors	4571.85	-29.15
Grasim Ind	2386.60	44.15
HCL Tech	1387.40	-86.45
HDFC Bank	1529.50	19.70
HDFC Life	575.10	-12.75
Hero MotoCorp	4457.70	-33.90
Hindalco	650.05	0.75
Hind Unilever	2226.10	3.45
ICICI Bank	1160.15	52.25
IndusInd Bank	1487.25	40.85
Infosys	1434.75	4.50
ITC	438.20	-1.80
JSW Steel	895.75	8.50
Kotak Bank	1640.40	31.90
L&T	3634.30	29.10
LTIMindtree Ltd.	4743.95	-44.10
M&M	2062.05	17.15
Maruti Suzuki	12689.85	-13.50
NestleIndia	2509.80	27.05
NTPC	363.00	7.00
ONGC	283.20	0.30
PowerGrid Corp	293.70	1.45
Reliance Ind	2930.05	24.95
SBI Life	1422.35	7.10
State Bank	826.50	25.20
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2492.20	-6.40
Sun Pharma	1521.60	15.05
TataConsumerProduct	1098.50	-4.15
Tata Motors	1000.60	1.10
Tata Steel	167.40	1.60
TCS	3870.20	48.85
Tech Mahindra	1288.30	9.55
Titan	3604.85	20.05
UltraTech Cement	9964.45	263.55
Wipro	462.95	-1.65

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on April 29

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	83.27	83.59
Euro	89.24	89.59
British Pound	104.34	104.74
Japanese Yen (100)	53.44	53.65
Chinese Yuan	11.50	11.54
Swiss Franc	91.37	91.73
Singapore Dollar	61.24	61.48
Canadian Dollar	60.99	61.23
Malaysian Ringitt	17.46	17.54
Australian Dollar	54.66	54.88

Source:Indian Bank

Banking stocks lift Sensex by over 1%

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Benchmark S&P BSE Sensex gained more than 1% on Monday led by banking stocks, closing 941 points, or 1.28%, higher at 74,671.

Sensex stocks which gained the most included ICICI Bank (up 4.67%), State Bank (3.09%), IndusInd Bank (2.9%), UltraTech Cement (2.7%), Axis Bank (2.6%) and NTPC (2.07%). The NSE Nifty-50 index too surged 223.45 points to 22,643.40.

"Nifty PSU Bank and Nifty Bank indices outperformed... and were up by 2.56% and 2.54% respectively," said Vaibhav Vidwani, Research Analyst, Bonanza Portfolio.

"Strong results from ICICI Bank and the Bank of Maharashtra, along with high expectations of good results from other banks, attracted investors to PSU and private banks."

Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking said, "Favourable global cues combined with noticeable traction in banking majors aided a positive start, which strengthened as the day progressed. The fresh buoyancy in the banking index has paved the way for a new high in the Nifty index."

Strong demand lifts UltraTech Q4 PAT by 36% to ₹2,258 crore

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

UltraTech Cement Ltd., an Adity Birla Group firm reported fourth quarter consolidated net profit grew 36% year-on-year (YoY) to ₹2258 crore. Consolidated net sales revenue at ₹20,069 crore rose 9% YoY on the back of strong demand and ongoing production expansion across locations to reach 200 mtpa.

For FY24 the company's consolidated net profit grew 38% to ₹7,005 crore. Consolidated net sales for

FY24 rose 12% to ₹69,810 crore, the company said in a filing.

The Board recommended a dividend of ₹70 per equity share of face value ₹10 each, aggregating ₹2,020.84 crore.

Chola MS posts 23% growth in FY24 GWP to ₹7,598 crore

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Cholamandalam MS General Insurance Co. Ltd. (Chola MS) posted a 23% YoY growth in gross written premium (GWP) to ₹7,598 crore for FY24.

Chola MS recorded a profit before tax of ₹444 crore against ₹264 crore. During the fourth quarter, it recorded a GWP of ₹2,020 crore and PBT of ₹91 crore, the Murugappa group firm said.

The investment corpus crossed ₹16,811 crore with growth in investment income. Solvency margin stood at 1.79 times against the regulatory minimum of 1.5 times, Chola MS said.

Increasing global uncertainties may impact exports, says FIEO

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The escalating geopolitical tensions may have implications for the country's exports as it is likely to impact global demand, apex exporters' body FIEO said.

The uncertainties caused by the continuing war between Russia and Ukraine impacted India's outbound shipments in 2023-24, which recorded a dip of 3.11% to $437 billion. Imports too slid by more than 8% to $677.24 billion.

"If the global situation continues to be like this, it will impact global demand," said FIEO Director General Ajay Sahai said. "In the first quarter numbers, the demand slowdown may be visible."

He added that freight rates were softening, giving an indication that demand may be impacted in the times to come.

He also said that India's rupee depreciated only about 1.3% during 2023-24 as against Chinese Yuan's 4.8%, Thai Baht's 6.3% and Malaysian Ringgit's 7%.

The FIEO DG suggested the government take certain steps for exporters on the liquidity front.

"Due to demand slowdown, offtake of goods will be low so foreign buyers will also take a longer period to make payments. So we require funds for a longer period. Exporters also need interest subvention support," Mr. Sahai said.

He sought continuation of interest equalisation scheme. On December 8, the Union Cabinet approved an additional allocation of ₹2,500 crore for the continuation of the scheme up to June 30.

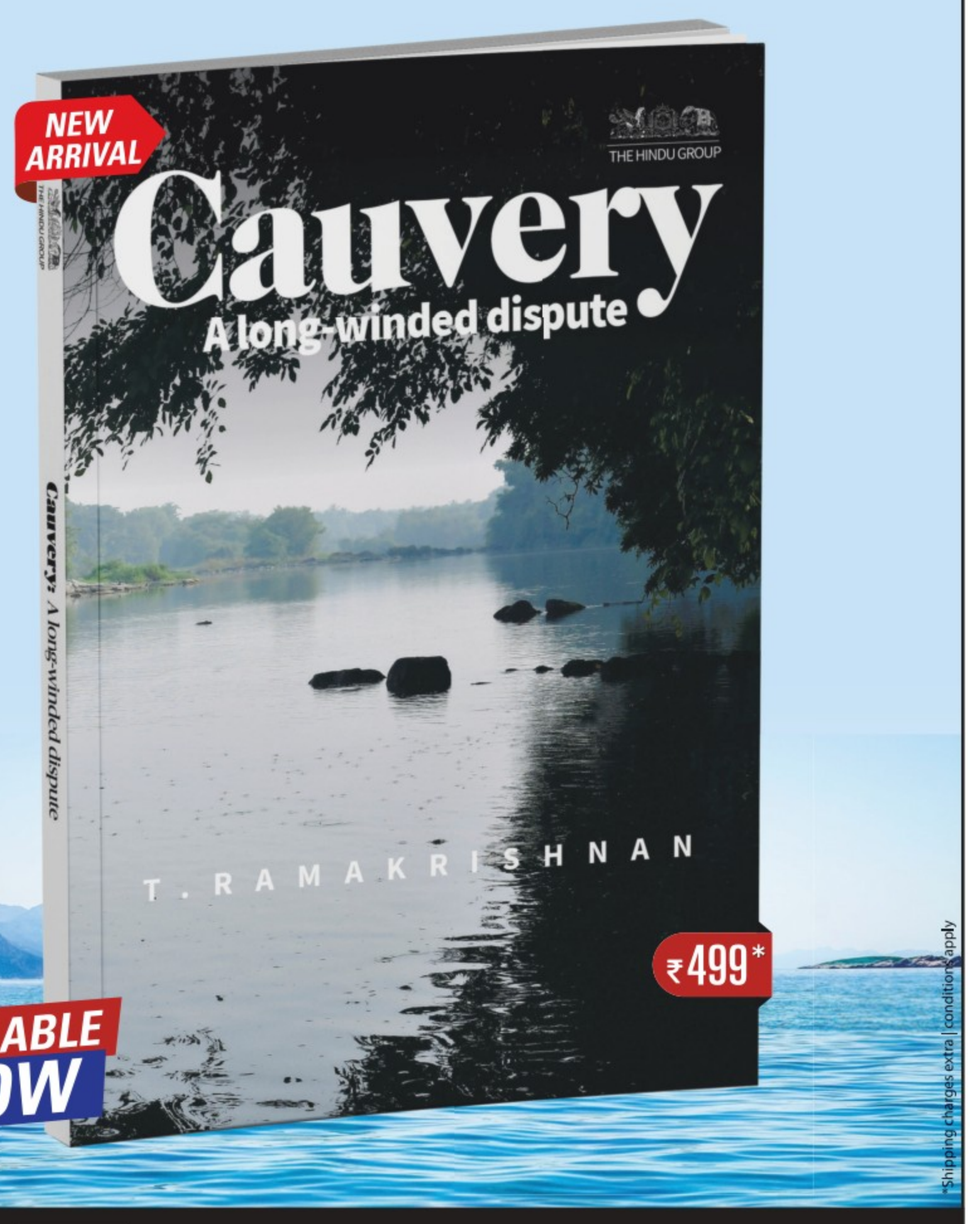
The scheme helps exporters from identified sectors and MSME manufacturer exporters to avail competitive rates on pre- and post-shipment rupee export credit. "The rates should be enhanced to 3% and 5%," Mr. Sahai added.

THE HINDU GROUP

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP

RESOLVING A VEXATIOUS ISSUE

Finding a solution to the vexatious Cauvery dispute has been a challenge to even the collective wisdom of veteran politicians, seasoned policy makers, experts and farmers. It even tested the strength of India's federal structure at times. After bickering among riparian constituents of the Cauvery basin for over a century and exhausting all avenues, judiciary, finally, had to do the task of apportioning the quantum of water for each riparian party. This book gives an account of how the dispute evolved over the years, especially after the 1924 Agreement between Madras Presidency and the Princely State of Mysore. It also drives home the point that the last word has not yet been said on the issue. Apart from the subject of water sharing, the work discusses challenges facing the river on various fronts, including environment.



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'India can lead on sustainability initiatives for entire Asia-Pacific'

Mini Tejaswi
MUMBAI

India is uniquely positioned to lead on climate change, drive sustainability and ESG initiatives for the entire Asia-Pacific, said Paul Marriott, President, SAP Asia-Pacific and Japan.

"The Asian market represents more than 50% of global emissions, and as one of the fastest growing hotbeds of innovation and economic activity in the region, India is in a unique position to lead against climate change," he said speaking at the company's annual tech exposition, SAP NOW India 2024.

Mr. Marriott, a technocrat with a master's in AI, said it was encouraging to

Paul Marriott

see several Indian firms recognizing the need to embrace investing in sustainability and ESG activities.

Sounding confident, Mr. Marriott said strong leadership, young talent, sprawling AI and start-up landscape and innovation capabilities across businesses would aid India reach its $30 trillion GDP goal by 2047.

"It is a staggering 10 times from today, but it is possible with the kind of innovations we are seeing in businesses across all the segments," he said.

He said SAP, the German cloud software firm, is investing significantly in India to empower cutting-edge technology to give businesses the next big opportunity in an AI era.

Citing a recent SAP study, he said 86% of Indian firms saw a positive correlation between sustainability and profitability, leading to greater investments in sustainability. He added that we must integrate carbon and financial data to inform decision-making.

(The writer was invited by SAP India to the event)

Coca-Cola bottler SLAM establishes ₹700-cr. plant

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

SLAM Beverages Private Ltd., Coca-Cola's biggest independent bottler in South Asia, said it had almost fully commissioned it's biggest-ever bottling plant located at Trishundi in Amethi, U.P.

The last line would go into production in the second week of May and help cater to the growing need for its products in summer.

The plant has a total manufacturing capacity of 4,600 bottles per minute. The firm added it would invest ₹200 crore more in capacity expansion at the same location.

MAI MAHIU

At least 45 killed in Kenya after dam bursts amid torrential rains

AFP

At least 45 people died when a dam burst near a town in Kenya's Rift Valley, the police said on Monday, as torrential rains and floods battered the country. The disaster raises the total death toll over the March-May wet season in Kenya to more than 120 as heavier than usual rainfall pounds East Africa, compounded by El Nino. AFP

DHAKA

Bangladesh again closes schools nationwide due to heatwave

AFP

A Bangladeshi court ordered a nationwide shutdown of schools on Monday due to an ongoing heatwave, the day after the government sent millions of children back to class despite searing temperatures. Average temperatures in the capital Dhaka over the past week have been 4-5° C higher than the 30-year average for the same period. AFP

HONIARA

Solomon Islands' pro-China PM will not be standing for new term

AFP

Solomon Islands' Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare said on Monday he would not stand for a new term, ending his pro-China rule of more than four years. His withdrawal followed inconclusive April 17 elections that led his party to choose Foreign Minister Jeremiah Manele as its parliamentary leader. AFP

TURIN

G-7 Ministers agree to phase out coal-fired power plants by 2030s

GETTY IMAGES

G-7 Energy Ministers have agreed a time frame for phasing out coal-fired power plants, a British Minister said on the sidelines of a G-7 meeting in Turin on Monday. "We do have a deal to phase out coal in the first half of the 2030s", British Nuclear and Renewables Minister Andrew Bowie said, calling it "an historic agreement". AFP

Report names Indian official in Pannun case

According to *Washington Post*, RAW official Vikram Yadav directed businessman Nikhil Gupta, now in custody in the Czech Republic, to hire a hitman to kill Pannun outside his New York residence; it says NSA Ajit Doval was 'probably aware of RAW's plans to kill Sikh activists'

Suhasini Haidar
WASHINGTON

U.S. authorities believe the alleged plot to kill Khalistani activist, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, who is wanted on terror charges in India, was ordered by the previous chief of the Indian Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), and had official sanction from senior intelligence officials "with ties to [Prime Minister Narendra Modi's inner circle", the *Washington Post* reported.

Escalating campaign

The report identified, for the first time, an RAW officer whose name had been withheld in the case papers made available by the Justice Department in New York in November 2023.

In a separate press release, the *Post* said, on the basis of interviews with "more than three dozen current and former senior officials in the United States, India, Canada, Britain, Germany and Australia", that other RAW officers have faced "arrest, expulsion and reprimand" in recent months, indicating that there was more international coordination about what it called "escalating campaign of aggression" against Indian diaspora members by India's intelligence operatives.

The Ministry of External Affairs declined to comment on the *Post* report on Monday. Last week, in response to a question on the allegations, the MEA spokesperson said a "high-level committee is looking into information that was shared by the American side with us, because [it] also equally impacts our national security.

Controversial figure: The report says the plot to kill Gurpatwant Singh Pannun had sanctions from senior intelligence figures. AP

"In reports that have been closely held within the American government, U.S. intelligence officials have assessed that the operation targeting Pannun was approved by the RAW chief at the time, Samant Goel," said the report.

"U.S. spy agencies have more tentatively assessed that Mr. Modi's National Security Adviser, Ajit Doval, was probably aware of RAW's plans to kill Sikh activists," it added.

'Not our policy'

According to the story, the R&AW official identified as Vikram Yadav had directed Indian businessman Nikhil Gupta, now in custody in the Czech Republic pending extradition to the U.S. to stand trial in the case, to hire a hitman to kill Pannun outside his New York residence.

Mr. Yadav, believed to be a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) official on deputation to the RAW, has subsequently been repatriated to the paramilitary forces, other U.S. media have reported.

While the MEA has maintained that such killings are not Indian policy, and has denied Canadian allegations of a similar hit on Khalistani activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada, the government has agreed to an enquiry on the U.S. allegations.

The *Post* story also dwells at length on differences between the White House and the Justice Department that oversaw the FBI-DEA investigation in the case.

Humza Yousaf quits as Scottish First Minister, SNP leader

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

Humza Yousaf

Scotland's First Minister Humza Yousaf said he will resign as First Minister and from the leadership of the Scottish National Party (SNP) following days of political drama that unfolded after he ended the 'Bute House' power-sharing agreement with the Scottish Greens. Mr. Yousaf said he would continue in the role of First Minister until a replacement was found.

Policy differences between the Greens and the SNP reached a breaking point with the SNP backtracking on climate-related commitments earlier in April. Mr. Yousaf decided to be the first to pull the plug on the relationship on April 25, as the Greens proposed an internal party vote on whether to stay in the power-sharing agreement. The outgoing First Minister had hoped to have a more informal set up with the Greens, built on issue-based support while leading a minority government (the SNP has 63 of 129 seats in the Scottish parliament). However, the Greens did not appear ready to participate in this watered-down set up.

"I clearly underestimated the level of hearts and upset that caused," Mr. Yousaf said, as he announced his resignation on Monday, from Bute House, his official residence in Edinburgh.

Within hours of the drama unfolding last week, unionist parties (the SNP is pro-Scottish independence) mounted an attack on Mr. Yousaf and the SNP. The Scottish Conservatives tabled a no-confidence motion against Mr. Yousaf and Scottish Labour tabled a motion against the SNP government. On Monday, Mr. Yousaf said that while it was "absolutely possible" to have faced this week's motions, he did not want to make deals that would compromise his values.

Mr. Yousaf, 39, a first generation Briton and child of Pakistani immigrants, said he could not imagine, as a child, that someone who looked like him could be First Minister.

"But we now live in a U.K. that has a British Hindu Prime Minister, a Muslim Mayor of London at Black Welsh First Minister," he said, adding this was evidence that multiculturalism in the U.K. had not failed.

He talked about needing a fairer tax system and the descent into "a toxic culture war".

"Each and every one of us must resist the temptation of populism at the expense of minorities, particularly in a general election year," he said. He made references to Gaza, where some of his wife's relatives were stranded, following the hostilities between Israel and Hamas.

U.S. finds five IDF units at fault for rights violations

Reuters
WASHINGTON

The U.S. State Department found five units of the Israeli military responsible for gross violations of human rights in incidents that took place outside of Gaza before conflict broke out between Israel and Hamas in October, the State Department said on Monday.

Four of the units have effectively remediated the violations, while Israel has submitted additional information regarding the fifth unit and the U.S. is continuing conversations with the government, State Department deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel told reporters.

U.S. weapons sales to the units will not be affected, Mr. Patel said. He declined to offer specifics on what violations of human rights were committed, which units were involved or what remediation steps were taken.

"After a careful process, we found five Israeli units responsible for individual incidents of gross violations of human rights. All of these were incidents much before October 7th and none took place in Gaza," Mr. Patel said.

"Four of these units have effectively remediated these violations, which is what we expect partners to do... For a remaining unit, we continue to be in consultations and engagements with the government of Israel."

Israel's military conduct has come under increasing scrutiny as its forces have killed some 34,500 Palestinians in Gaza. The Gaza Strip has been reduced to a wasteland, and extreme food shortages have prompted fears of famine.

Demonstrations roil U.S. campuses ahead of graduations as protesters spar over Gaza war

Associated Press
LOS ANGELES

Protests are roiling college campuses across the U.S. as upcoming graduation ceremonies are threatened by disruptive demonstrators, with students and others sparring over the war in Gaza and its mounting death toll.

Many campuses were largely quiet over the weekend as demonstrators stayed by tents erected as protest headquarters, although a few colleges saw forced removals and arrests. Many students are demanding their universities cut financial ties with Israel over the large-scale operation in Gaza it says was launched to stamp out the militant Palestinian group Hamas.

Protesters on both sides of the rancourous debate shouted and shoved each other during duelling demonstrations on Sunday at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

About 275 people were arrested on Saturday at various campuses including Indiana University at Bloomington, Arizona State University and Washington University in St. Louis. The number of arrests nationwide approached 900 since the New York police removed a pro-Palestinian protest encampment at Columbia University and arrested more than 100 demonstrators on April 18.

Face-off: A pro-Israel counter-protester during a demonstration by protesters in support of Palestinians at the UCLA. REUTERS

The plight of students who have been arrested has become a central part of protests, with the students and a growing number of faculty demanding amnesty for protesters. At issue is whether the suspensions and legal records will follow students through their adult lives.

Faculty members at universities in California, Georgia and Texas have initiated or passed largely symbolic votes of no confidence in their leadership.

White House national security spokesman John Kirby said U.S. President Joe Biden "knows that there are very strong feelings" but would leave managing the protests to local authorities.

Tesla CEO Musk visits China during time of auto show

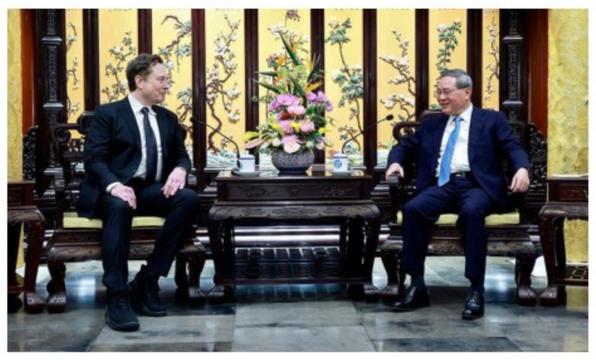
Associated Press
BEIJING

Tesla CEO Elon Musk met with a top government leader in the Chinese capital on Sunday, just as the nation's carmakers are showing off their latest electric vehicle models at the Beijing auto show.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang told Mr. Musk that he hopes the U.S. will work more with China on "win-win" cooperation, citing Tesla's operations in China as a successful example of economic cooperation, China's state broadcaster CCTV said on its main evening news program.

Welcome antidote

For China, Mr. Musk is a welcome antidote to the tough talk from U.S. officials, which played out most recently during a visit by Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Mr. Li's remarks also reflect China's efforts to attract foreign investment to boost its flagging economy.



Hot seat: Tesla founder and CEO Elon Musk, left, meets with Chinese Premier Li Qiang in Beijing on Sunday. AP

It was not clear whether Mr. Musk would visit the auto show, which runs through this week. Chinese automakers and startups have launched a bevy of electric cars in recent years, some going head-to-head with Tesla and undercutting the American maker on price.

An earlier CCTV online report said that Mr. Musk had come at the invitation of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade and met with its president, Ren Hongbin, to exchange views on further cooperation and other topics.

Tesla has a major manufacturing base in Shanghai for both domestic sales in China and exports to Europe and other regions.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

MATERIALS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
ADDENDUM TO AUCTION PROGRAMME MAY'24
NOTTCE NO:5/2024

e-Auction will be conducted for disposal of Ferrous scrap, Non-Ferrous scrap, other Misc scrap, condemned Wagon, Coaches & Locos, Scrap Rails and other Permanent Way scrap material.

Sl. No	e-auction conducted by	Existing Auction date which is cancelled	Re-Scheduled Auction date for 03/05/24	Material for auction
1.	GSD/PER	03/05/24	07/05/24	The details of items to be sold in e-auction will be available in catalogue **www.ireps.gov.in** website

All other auctions scheduled for May'24 remains unaltered

For detailed terms and conditions and downloading of catalogue please visit our web-site **http://www.ireps.gov.in -> E-Auction->Sale->Live Auctions.**

Principal Chief Materials Manager

The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd
(A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking) Sankaramangalam, Kollam-691 583
Phone: 0476-2651215 to 2651217, e-mail: md@kmml.com, URL: www.kmml.com

TENDER NOTICE

For more details, please visit E-Tendering Portal, https://etenders.kerala.gov.in or www.kmml.com

Sl No.	Tender ID	Items
1	2024_KMML_671995_1	For the supply of Squirrel Cage Induction Motor
2	2024_KMML_671798_1	For the supply of CS Pipes
3	2024_KMML_671896_1	For the supply of Roaster Discharge Grating Assembly
4	2024_KMML_671926_1	For the supply of 1100V grade XLPE and PVC insulated PVC sheathed steel armoured Aluminium conductor cable of various sizes
5	2024_KMML_672097_1	For fabrication & Supply of Crude Tickle Storage Tank F-205
6	2024_KMML_672092_1	For the supply of 2 x 10 KVA Parallel Redundant Industrial Type UPS

Chavara 29.04.2024 Sd/- Managing Director for The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd

ICMR-NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NUTRITION
(INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH)
Jamai Osmania Post, Tarnaka, Hyderabad - 500 007, TS.

ADMISSION NOTIFICATION

Applications are invited from eligible candidates for admission into NIN Common Entrance Test - NCET-2024 (ONLINE) for 2-year M.Sc (Applied Nutrition) & M.Sc (Sports Nutrition) at ICMR-NIN, Hyderabad "under the aegis of AcSIR".

Last date: 20th May, 2024. Please see the website **https://www.nin.res.in** for notification and link for application.

Sd/- SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

NALCO
National Aluminium Company Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise)

Nalco Bhawan, P/1, Nayapalli
Bhubaneswar-751013, Odisha, India
CIN : L27203OR1981GOI000920
A NAVRATNA COMPANY

EXTENSION OF RFQ SUBMISSION DATE
FOR EMPANELMENT OF DIFFERENT CATEGORY OF HOSPITALS / PATHOLOGICAL LABS / CLINICS / PHYSIOTHERAPY CENTERS

The last date of submission of offer for RFQ **Ref no. TNCC-021/2024** for empanelment of different category of **Hospitals / Pathological Labs / Clinics / Physiotherapy Centers** etc is hereby extended upto **31/05/2024**. For details and further updates visit **www.nalcoindia.com** (under Menu / Active Tender).

Dy. General Manager (T&C)

THE NATIONAL SMALL INDUSTRIES CORPORATION LTD.
(A Government of India Enterprise)
Corporate Identification No. U74140DL1955GOI002481

Revised RFPs for Selection of Vendors for Supply of Tool Kits under PM Vishwakarma Scheme

NSIC invites online bids on CPP Portal against the 18 no. of RFPs stated in title above.

The details of RFPs are available under the web link **https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app** and may be downloaded.

Last date & time for submission of proposals is 20.05.2024 by 1300 hours.

Any further announcement/ corrigendum regarding RFP will be made available on above two web links.

PUTTING HIS HAND UP

The way Varun turned up today was simply brilliant: Shreyas

K.R. DEEPAK

KKR skipper complimented Varun Chakravarthy for his superb spell against DC. "He (Varun) was not at his best in the last few games, but the way he turned up today was simply brilliant. We have been thinking about it (qualification) from match one, that has been our mindset. Just focusing on our work ethic," said Shreyas.

'PHIL'OSOPHY

'It's high-risk, but it's also about putting the odds in your favour'

K.R. DEEPAK

Phil Salt said though an attacking approach is high risk, it is the way to go in T20s. "It is high-risk but it is also about putting the odds in your favour and not taking the risks you don't want to. You just have to keep backing yourself and keep going for the right options. It's helpful to keep on it first and see what it is doing," he said.

RUNS, MORE RUNS

There is no help for the bowlers, says Royal Challengers' Siraj

VIJAY SONEJI

RCB's Mohammed Siraj opened up about the batter-friendly conditions in the IPL. "Good luck to the bowlers. Earlier conceding 40 in four overs used to be considered expensive, now it's the new normal. There is no help for the bowlers. The grounds are small and the wickets are flat. There's no swing," Siraj said.

POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Kartikeya confident of MI making it to the playoffs

SANDEEP SAXENA

Despite his side sitting ninth in the standings, off-spinner Kumar Kartikeya backed Mumbai Indians to make it to the playoffs. "We are not under pressure. We have been in similar situations before. Last year, we had to win many games in the end to qualify, and we did it. So, we're pretty positive that we can still make it," Kartikeya said.

Knight Riders have the measure of Capitals in quick time

After the Varun-led attack restricts the visitors to 153, Salt conjures up another explosive innings to set up an easy win

IPL-17

Y.B. Sarangi
KOLKATA

Phil Salt's explosive half-century put Kolkata Knight Riders back on winning ways as the host recorded an emphatic seven-wicket win over Delhi Capitals in the Indian Premier League at the Eden Gardens here on Monday.

KKR rode on Varun Chakravarthy's brilliant three-wicket haul to restrict DC to 153 before overhauling the modest target in the 17th over to post its sixth win.

Salt, let off on 15, took charge of the chase. He executed some clinical clean hitting, plundering seven fours and five sixes, primarily through cut, pull and drives, in a glorious 33-ball 68.

Foxed! Axar had no clue to this carrom ball from Narine on a day when the Capitals batters failed to get going. K.R. DEEPAK

Quickfire knock

Salt, who collected 18 runs off the sixth over, reached his fourth 50 by hammering Khaleel Ahmed for a stunning six. He added 79 with Sunil Narine in 6.1 overs to put the home side in a commanding position.

Axar Patel claimed both the openers. Narine was caught in the deep, while Salt was played on. Rinku Singh fell cheaply, but the two Iyers, Shreyas and Venkatesh, ensured victory.

Earlier, KKR bowlers struck at regular intervals to dent DC's progress. On their return, pacers Mitchell Starc and Vaibhav Arora scalped three wickets even as the tourists plundered 66 runs in the PowerPlay.

Vaibhav asked some questions of the batters and captured two wickets. Prithvi Shaw was caught behind, while Shai Hope was bowled by a peach of a delivery.

Meanwhile, Starc got rid of the dangerous Jake Fraser-McGurk, who pulled one to Venkatesh Iyer at deep square-leg before Harshit Rana accounted for Abishek Porel.

Using the conditions

The crafty Varun and the accurate Narine combined well and enjoyed the slight turn on offer. The former began by taking the vital wicket of Rishabh Pant (27) and added two more to deny DC any scope of revival.

Pant (27), dropped by Harshit off Varun, could not capitalise on the 'life' he got on 18. The southpaw miscued another one to Shreyas at extra-cover.

Tristan Stubbs and impact player Kumar Kushagra were smartly caught by Salt, while Narine foxed Axar. Kuldeep Yadav (35 not out) utilised a reprieve to swing his bat to register his highest score and contribute some valuable runs.

Varun delights with a three-wkt. haul, while Vaibhav and Harshit scalp two wickets each

Next assignment

KKR: May 3 vs **MI**
Mumbai, 7.30 p.m.

DC: May 7 vs **RR**
Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

SCOREBOARD

DELHI CAPITALS

Prithvi Shaw c Salt b Vaibhav 13 *(7b, 3x4)*, Jake Fraser-McGurk c Venkatesh b Starc 12 *(7b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Abishek Porel b Harshit 18 *(15b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Shai Hope b Vaibhav 6 *(3b, 1x6)*, Rishabh Pant c Shreyas b Varun 27 *(20b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Axar Patel b Narine 15 *(21b, 2x4)*, Tristan Stubbs c Salt b Varun 4 *(7b)*, Kumar Kushagra **(Impact Player in place of Shaw)** c Salt b Varun 1 *(3b)*, Kuldeep Yadav (not out) 35 *(26b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Rasikh Salam c Shreyas b Harshit 8 *(10b, 1x4)*, Lizaad Williams (not out) 1 *(2b)*; Extras (lb-3, nb-1, w-9): 13; Total (for nine wkts. in 20 overs): 153.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-17 (Shaw, 1.3 overs), 2-30 (Fraser-McGurk, 2.5), 3-37 (Hope, 3.3), 4-68 (Porel, 6.4), 5-93 (Pant, 10.1), 6-99 (Stubbs, 12.1), 7-101 (Axar, 13.3), 8-111 (Kushagra, 14.3), 9-140 (Rasikh, 18.2).

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING

Starc 3-0-43-1, Vaibhav 4-0-29-2, Harshit 4-0-28-2, Narine 4-0-24-1, Varun 4-0-16-3, Russell 1-0-10-0.

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

Phil Salt b Axar 68 *(33b, 7x4, 5x6)*, Sunil Narine c Fraser-McGurk b Axar 15 *(10b, 3x4)*, Rinku Singh c Kuldeep b Williams 11 *(11b, 1x4)*, Shreyas Iyer (not out) 33 *(23b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Venkatesh Iyer (not out) 26 *(23b, 2x4, 1x6)*; Extras (lb-2, nb-1, w-1): 4; Total (for three wkts. in 16.3 overs): 157.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-79 (Narine, 6.1), 2-96 (Salt, 8.1), 3-100 (Rinku, 9.2).

CAPITALS BOWLING

Williams 3-0-38-1, Khaleel 3-0-28-0, Rasikh 2.3-0-30-0, Axar 4-0-25-2, Kuldeep 4-0-34-0.

Toss: DC; **PoM:** Varun.

KKR won by seven wickets with 21 deliveries remaining.

Ruturaj one step ahead of the bowlers, feels Hussey

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

Not many players entered this year's edition of the IPL with more pressure and expectations than Ruturaj Gaikwad. On the eve of the tournament opener, the 27-year-old took over the captaincy of Chennai Super Kings, filling in the enormous shoes of M.S. Dhoni. And it was not easy for him at the start of the season, as it took five games to get his first half-century.

Especially with an out-of-form top order and the absence of his regular opening partner, Devon Conway, the Super Kings skipper was searching for the right approach. He even demoted himself to number three in two outings to accommodate Ajinkya Rahane, who was struggling with a calf issue.

But in the last five matches, Ruturaj has come into his own with three half-centuries and a ton while striking at over 170. At a time when the focus of most openers is to blast the leather off the cork, Ruturaj has shown the virtues of timing and placement can still do wonders.

CSK batting coach Michael Hussey praised Ruturaj and felt the latter was one step ahead of the bowlers.

In the groove: Ruturaj, after a slow start to the season, has come into his own now. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

"He is a brilliant timer of the cricket ball," said Hussey. "I've been asking him what his secret is in terms of his placement; he always finds the gaps. He is also a smart batter; he knows when to attack and when to soak up pressure."

One question ahead of the season was how he would perform with the burden of captaincy, and Hussey felt he was growing nicely into the role.

"It's been challenging for him as well. He has taken over the captaincy role from arguably the greatest skipper of all time in this country and has been able to come in and keep his batting standards up very high. He's got some good help around him with Stephen Fleming and Dhoni. But to take care of the captaincy aspect in addition to his batting is a real credit to him," Hussey added.

Race for the caps

ORANGE

	Inns	Runs	HS	SR	100s/50s
Kohli (RCB)	10	500	113*	147.49	1/4
Ruturaj (CSK)	9	447	108*	149.49	1/3
Sai Sudharsan (GT)	10	418	84*	135.71	0/2

PURPLE

	Inns	Wkts	BB	Econ	4W/5W
Bumrah (MI)	9	14	5/21	6.63	0/1
Mustafizur (CSK)	8	14	4/29	9.75	1/0
Harshal (PBKS)	9	14	3/15	10.18	0/0

LSG, MI will want to mend inconsistent form for a shot at playoffs

Back in the swing: Mayank's return brings a handy reinforcement for a misfiring Super Giants pace unit. SANDEEP SAXENA

Abhishek Saini
LUCKNOW

Hanging on to its playoff chances by a thread and fast running out of time, Mumbai Indians (MI) will hope its season turnaround can begin with the Indian Premier League match against Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) at the Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow on Tuesday.

The dwindling returns from its batters, starting at the top with Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan, have been symptomatic of its ailing season.

The opening salvo had four 50-plus stands in the side's first six games. In the three outings since, it has had none.

MI will hope Pandya's 46 off 24 against the Capitals last week can help him turn a corner and bring some support for Tilak Varma.

With the ball, Nuwan Thushara has made an unceremonious start to his IPL career, conceding at 12 runs per over. The potential return of Gerald Coetzee will ease some of Jasprit Bumrah's burden.

These issues hold a familiar ring for the Super Giants too, who will want to mend their inconsistent form before it weighs on their playoff contention. On the ascendency after back-to-back wins over Chennai Super Kings, Lucknow was handed a reality check by Rajasthan Royals last week.

Today's match

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS vs. MUMBAI INDIANS

Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
PLAYED: 4
LSG 3 | MI 1

PREVIOUS MEETING
MI won by 81 runs, 2023

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

To begin with, Mayank Yadav's return to fitness brings handy reinforcement for a misfiring pace unit.

K.L. Rahul would want to put his spinners, Ravi Bishnoi and Krunal Pandya, to better use. The pair has bowled a combined 50.4 overs across nine games.

Calls for improvement will fall on the Lucknow batters as well, with the heavy lifting having been left for Rahul and Nicholas Pooran so far. The contributions from overseas starters Quinton de Kock and Marcus Stoinis have been too far and few between.

Points Table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	9	8	1	16	0.694
Kolkata Knight Riders	9	6	3	12	1.096
Chennai Super Kings	9	5	4	10	0.810
Sunrisers Hyderabad	9	5	4	10	0.075
Lucknow Super Giants	9	5	4	10	0.059
Delhi Capitals	11	5	6	10	-0.442
Gujarat Titans	10	4	6	8	-1.113
Punjab Kings	9	3	6	6	-0.187
Mumbai Indians	9	3	6	6	-0.261
Royal Challengers	10	3	7	6	-0.415

Mitchell has found a nice role at No. 3: Hussey

S. Prasanna Venkatesan
CHENNAI

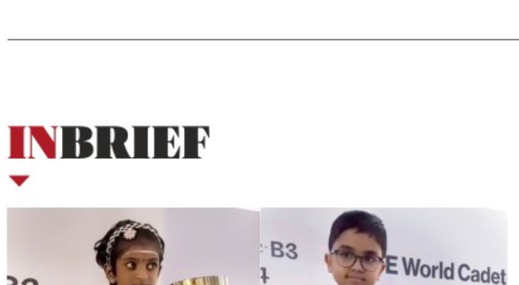
Chennai Super Kings batting coach Michael Hussey said Daryl Mitchell has found a nice and comfortable role as the No. 3 batter.

"It's not easy. He's a new player who's come to the team – Rachin Ravindra and him. We just expect them to be able to come in, fit in straight away, feel like they belong and come out and perform right from the word go. In reality, it's not easy. This is the IPL. It's the best T20 competition in the world. Sometimes it takes time," said Hussey.

INBRIEF

Sharvaanica and Divith win gold medals in World chess

India won two gold, one silver and a bronze in the World cadet rapid and blitz chess championships held in Durres, Albania. A.S. Sharvaanica bagged a gold (rapid girls' under-10) and silver (blitz girls' under-10) while Divith Reddy won a gold (rapid open under-8) and bronze (blitz open under-8).



Resilient Nadal overcomes Cachin in Madrid Open

Rafael Nadal's body withstood its toughest test yet at the Madrid Open as he needed three sets and more than three hours to get past 91st-ranked Pedro Cachin on Monday. Nadal won 6-1, 6-7(5), 6-3 to make it to the round-of-16 at the clay-court tournament where he is the record five-time champion. He will next face 31st-ranked Jiri Lehecka. The 37-year-old Nadal is trying to get in shape for next month's French Open. Since his latest injury layoff, he's had two matches in Barcelona and was pessimistic about his physical condition after arriving in Madrid. But he's won three more times in the capital.

Sultana and teammates visit schools to promote T20 WC

Bangladesh women's cricket team captain Nigar Sultana, along with teammates Fahima Khatun and Marufa Akter, visited three schools in Sylhet. The visit was planned to promote women's cricket in the country ahead of the Women's T20 World Cup which will be hosted by Bangladesh later this year.

Fencer Bhavani fails to secure Paris Olympics quota place

A six-member Indian fencing team, led by Bhavani Devi, failed to secure a single Paris 2024 Olympics quota place from the Asia Oceania Zonal Qualifiers here over the weekend. Bhavani, who became the first Indian fencer to compete in the Olympics at Tokyo 2020, was the top seed in women's sabre at the event here. She defeated Juliet Jie Min Heng of Singapore 15-8 in the quarterfinals, but lost 15-12 to Chu Wing Kiu of Hong Kong China in the semifinals. Only the winners of each event secured an Olympic quota for their respective countries. Karan Singh, Tanishka Khatri, Dev, Udaivir Singh and Joys Ashitha Stalinraj were the other Indians.

Thiago Silva to leave Chelsea at end of the season

Brazilian defender Thiago Silva announced on Monday his departure from Chelsea at the end of season after four years at the Premier League club but said he hoped to return in a different role. The 39-year-old joined from PSG on a free transfer in August 2020 and has made 151 appearances for Chelsea, winning the Champions League, Club World Cup and Super Cup. "Chelsea means a lot to me. I came here with the intention of only staying for a year and it ended up being four years," said Silva, whose sons are now on Chelsea's books, in an emotional video on the club website.

LIVE TELECAST

Badminton: Thomas & Uber Cup, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 7 a.m.

Bangladesh Women vs India Women: 2nd T20I, FanCode, 3.30 p.m.

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 7.30 p.m.

Champions League: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 12.30 a.m. (Wednesday).

India cruises into the quarterfinals

Prannoy returns to winning ways; Satwiksairaj-Chirag pair stretched even as other compatriots win easily

THOMAS CUP

Press Trust of India
CHENGDU (CHINA)

Defending champion India sailed to the knockout stages of the Thomas Cup with a 5-0 rout of England in a Group C contest here on Monday.

India, which defeated Thailand 4-1 in its opening tie, notched up a second consecutive win to qualify for the last eight.

H.S. Prannoy returned to winning ways, defeating Harry Huang 21-15, 21-15 to give India a 1-0 lead.

Morale-booster

"To give a start to the team is really important, it gives a good boost to the team to go ahead. It is really important to finish off the matches clinically as you saw against Thailand one match was bad for us," said Prannoy.

The star pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty was stretched to three games by Ben Lane and Sean Vendy in the first doubles fixtures before the 2022 World champion bronze medallist picked up a 21-17, 19-21, 21-15 win in 65 minutes.

Former World No. 1 K. Srikanth recorded a 21-16, 21-11 victory over Nadeem Dalvi to give India an unassailable 3-0 lead.

Did it! Prannoy gave India a flying start. X@BWFMEDIA

"Happy with the way both the matches have gone for me (in the tournament). There is a lot of pressure on players to win games. I feel I have played little easier opponents so far. But from now we will face better opponents and I have to be my best," Srikanth said.

The second doubles pair of M.R. Arjun and Dhruv Kapila then brushed aside Rory Easton and Alex Green 21-17, 21-19 before Kiran George prevailed 21-18, 21-12 over Cholan Kayan to wrap up the fixture.

India will take on group topper and record 14-time champion Indonesia in its final group fixture on Wednesday.

The result:

India bt England 5-0 (H.S. Prannoy bt Harry Huang 21-15, 21-15; Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty bt Ben Lane & Sean Vendy 21-17, 19-21, 21-15; K. Srikanth bt Nadeem Dalvi 21-16, 21-11; M.R. Arjun & Dhruv Kapila bt Rory Easton & Alex Green 21-17, 21-19; Kiran George bt Cholan Kayan 21-18, 21-12).

Seven Indian shuttlers qualify for the Olympics

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Seven Indian shuttlers, including P.V. Sindhu, have officially qualified for the Paris Games across four categories based on their Olympic Games Qualification rankings.

While Sindhu and singles men's shuttlers H.S. Pranoy and Lakshya Sen had sealed their Olympic spots long back, the formality was completed on Monday, the cut-off date set by international badminton federation (BWF).

As per the criteria, the top-16 shuttlers in men's and women's singles based on their Olympic Games Qualification ranking on the cutoff date book their tickets to the quadrennial showpiece.

Sindhu, a silver and bronze medallist at the Olympics, was placed 12th, while Prannoy and Sen were placed ninth and 13th respectively in men's singles.

The crack men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty was placed third at the end of the Olympic qualification cycle and will go into the Paris Games as one of the best medal hopes.

In women's doubles, Tanisha Crasto and Ashwini Ponnappa made the grade after finishing 13th at the end of the qualification cycle.

Selectors to meet in Ahmedabad today, squad to be announced later

T20 WORLD CUP

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The national selection committee led by Ajit Agarkar will meet BCCI secretary Jay Shah in Ahmedabad on Tuesday to finalise India's 15-member squad for the ICC T20 World Cup in the Americas but the official announcement might happen a day later.

The BCCI secretary is the convenor of the senior selection committee (men) and with Shah busy with his political commitments, it is understood that the meeting will be held in Ahmedabad.

The second wicketkeeper's slot and all-rounder Hardik Pandya's place in the side will be the two talking points of the meeting. It is understood that K.L. Rahul (IPL strike rate of 144 and 378 runs so far) and Sanju Samson (385 runs at 161) are still locked in a battle for the second 'keeper's place.

Indians assured of eight medals in youth category

BOXING

Sports Bureau

Brijesh Tamta, Sagar Jakhar and Sumit ensured semifinal spots and medals in the youth category at the ASBC Asian u-22 & Youth Boxing Championships 2024 in Astana on Monday.

While Sagar (60kg) and Sumit (67kg) had easy 5-0 victories to reach the last four, Brijesh (48kg) had to fight hard against Uzbekistan's Sabirov Sayfiddin with both boxers winning one round each. The Indian pugilist won the final round, and the bout, 4-3 after it was reviewed.

India is now assured of eight medals in the youth category as five women – Annu (48kg), Parthavi Grewal (66kg), Nikita Chand (60kg), Khushi Pooniya (81kg) and Nirjhara Bana (+81kg) – will begin campaigns in the semifinals.

Women in Blue will be eager to pull away further

INDIA IN BANGLADESH

Sports Bureau

An upbeat India will hope to take a 2-0 lead in the five-match T20I series against Bangladesh when the sides meet in the second game at Sylhet on Tuesday.

An all-round display helped the Women In Blue seal a 44-run win in the opening match on Sunday. After opting to bat, the visitors finished with 145 for seven. Bangladesh's batting woes, the side's Achilles heel against Australia, cost it again. Only skipper Nigar Sultana put up a fight, scoring a half-century. India's disciplined bowling in the first T20I will give it a lot of confidence. Renuka Singh and Pooja Vastrakar, who was handed new-ball duties, were able to keep the Bangladesh openers quiet, allowing them little room to score freely.

In her element: Yastika, who top-scored in the opening game, will look to continue in the same vein. X@BCCIWOMEN

Sajeevan Sajana made her debut while Radha Yadav returned to the side after a year. Given that this is a dress rehearsal ahead of the World Cup to be held in Bangladesh later this year, Harmanpreet Kaur's team could experiment with leg-spinner Asha Sobhana Joy, too. The hosts' fielding left a lot to be desired as a number of catches were dropped.

The bowling, however, posed questions of India's experienced batting order, not letting the batters give the final flourish.

Match begins at 3.30 p.m. IST.

Retro look: New Zealand players with the new jerseys unveiled ahead of the ICC T20 World Cup. X@BLACKCAPS

Ravindra and Henry in NZ squad for T20 WC

Agencies
AUCKLAND

Kane Williamson will lead New Zealand in the T20 World Cup for the fourth time while opener Devon Conway, recovering from a thumb injury, has also been named in the 15-man provisional squad for the ICC event in USA and Caribbean in June.

The squad led by Williamson was named here on Monday. Conway was ruled out of the ongoing IPL due to a thumb injury he suffered in February. Matt Henry and Rachin Ravindra are the only two of the 15 without T20 World Cup experience.

The squad: Kane Williamson (capt.), Finn Allen, Trent Boult, Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Daryl Mitchell, Jimmy Neesham, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Ish Sodhi, Tim Southee. **Travelling reserve:** Ben Sears.

WFI names squad for Olympic qualifier

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Wresting Federation of India (WFI) has named almost the same squad that competed in the Asian Qualifiers in Bishkek for the final Olympic Qualifying tournament in Istanbul next month.

The squad for the World Olympic Games Qualifiers (WOGQ) from May 9-13 will remain the same, except leaving out Vinesh Phogat (50kg), Anshu Malik (57kg) and Reetika (76kg) as they had sealed quota places.

The squad: Freestyle: Aman (57kg), Sujeet (65kg), Jaideep (74kg), Deepak Punia (86kg), Deepak (97kg), Sumit (125kg). **Greco-Roman:** Sumit (60kg), Ashu (67kg), Vikas (77kg), Sunil Kumar (87kg), Nitesh (97kg), Naveen (130kg). **Women:** Mansi (62kg), Nisha (68kg).

The title is in our hands, says City's Ake

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Nathan Ake is confident Manchester City will hold its nerve to overhaul Arsenal in the tension-filled Premier League title race.

City closed the gap on leader Arsenal to one point with a 2-0 win at Nottingham Forest.

"It's in our hands so we're not depending on what they do. That's the difference from last year, we were still depending on what they were doing," Ake said. "This season it's in our hands. The only thing we have to do is focus on the next one. It's so close but it's also so far away.

In control: Guardiola's side will clinch the title if it wins its last five league matches. AFP

The results: LaLiga: Real Betis 1 (Isco 38-pen) drew with Sevilla 1 (Salas 56). **Serie A:** Fiorentina 5 (Sottil 17, Martinez Quarta 54, Gonzalez 58, 66, Barak 62) bt Sassuolo 1 (Thorstvedt 57).

Archer Deepika re-inducted in TOPS

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Archer Deepika Kumari has been re-inducted into the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) core group ahead of the Paris Games, the Sports Ministry announced on Monday.

Another archer, Mrinal Chauhan, has been added to the TOPS Development Group, while Pravin Jadhav has been moved from Development to Core Group.

The MOC also inducted squash players Anahat Singh, Abhay Singh and Velavan Senthilkumar to the TOPS Development Group to help them prepare for the 2028 Olympics.

Opportunity for shot putter Tajinderpal to make it to Paris

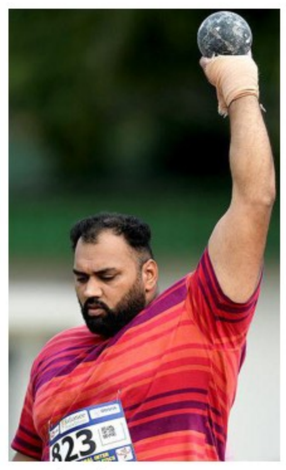
INDIAN GP

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Shot putter Tajinderpal Singh Toor will strive to make a mark in the Indian Grand Prix track and field competition at Sree Kanteerava Stadium on Tuesday.

Tajinderpal will hope to breach the Paris Olympics qualification standard of 21.50m. This is not beyond the reach of the Services athlete, whose personal best stands at 21.77m.

The tournament also marks the return of sprinter Hima Das, who was provisionally suspended by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for three whereabouts failures last year.



Tajinderpal. FILE PHOTO

Hima and 2016 Rio Olympian Srabani Nanda are among the eight competitors in the women's 200m event.

Eldhose Paul, who recorded a wind-assisted 17.03m jump to win the men's triple jump gold at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, is also in action.

The Olympic qualification mark, set at 17.22m, might be a bridge too far.

Close fight

The 2023 Asian Athletics Championships silver medallist Shaili Singh and Kerala's Nayana James fight for the women's long jump crown.

In the third edition of the Indian Open Jumps competition held here recently, Nayana had edged out Shaili for the gold medal.

Bayern and Real rekindle rivalry in the semifinal stage

Ancelotti's side travels to Bavaria for the first-leg clash, a fixture most repeated in the competition's history; the Spanish outfit knocked out the German giants in their three most recent tangles

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Agence France-Presse
MADRID

Real Madrid has its sights set on a LaLiga and Champions League double, but to lift the latter it must find a way past Bayern Munich, its '*bestia negra*'– 'black beast'.

Carlo Ancelotti's side travels to Bavaria for the semifinal first-leg clash on Tuesday, a fixture most repeated in the competition's history.

Despite Real's forbidding nickname for Bayern, they have shaded the Bundesliga side across their 26 encounters, with 12 wins to Bayern's 11.

In the last decade, Real clearly have the edge on the German giants. The record 14-time winners knocked out Bayern in each of their three most recent tangles, in the semifinals in 2014 and 2018, and the quarterfinals in 2017.

"They've had a tough season but right now they are probably in their best moment and they have Kane, who scores a lot of goals," Ancelotti said about his opponent.

Real goalkeeper Andriy Lunin was the hero in the shoot-out win over City as he saved two penalties, but will feel the pressure of Thibaut Courtois breathing down his neck.

Ancelotti said the Belgian is fit again and will play next weekend in LaLiga, meaning Lunin may face a fight for his place for the second leg or potential final.

Bracing up: Bellingham would love to get one over his former rivals in the 'European Clasico'. X@REALMADRID

Jude Bellingham has stepped into Benzema's shoes as Real's top scorer, and he has delivered on the big occasion this season, with three goals in three games against Barcelona.

The England international was injured and did not play on the final day last season as Dortmund lost out to Bayern in the German title race and Bellingham would love to get one over his former rivals in the 'European Clasico'.

Match starts at 00.30 a.m. (Wednesday).

Clinical Mumbai City storms into summit clash

ISL

Karthik Mudaliar
MUMBAI

Mumbai City FC downed FC Goa 2-0 (5-2 on aggregate) in the second leg of the ISL 10 semifinal at the Mumbai Football Arena on Monday.

MCFC, which was already ahead by a goal coming into the match, sealed the tie after forward Jorge Pereyra Diaz and Lallianzuala Chhangte found the net in the 69th and 83rd minute respectively.

Goa started the game aggressively, pushing its players high up while the home team was happy to sit back and operate solely on counter-attacks.

Sealing it: Chhangte shut out a Goa comeback. X@INDSUPERLEAGUE

Although Goa dominated the first half, it was MCFC that came close to bulging the net but was stopped by the post twice.

Once off of Tiri's near-post header in the 22nd minute, and the second time in the 34th, when Chhangte's curling effort from the right struck the far post.

Goa was pushing ahead as Noah Sadaoui and Udanta Singh ran riot on the flanks. However, the Gaurs failed to create good chances on goal when it came to the final third.

Diaz scored the opener after a corner kick was met by Rahul Bheke's header and although it was stopped by the keeper, the ball landed straight onto the goalscorer's foot and he tapped it in without fail.

Later, Goa lost possession after a corner-kick as MCFC's Vikram Partap Singh launched a counter on the left flank with a perfectly weighed through-ball to Chhangte behind the defence. The winger dribbled past the keeper and passed it into an empty net.

Heavyweight clash

MCFC will be looking to avenge its Shield defeat against Mohun Bagan Super Giant when the two sides meet in the final on May 4.

The result: Mumbai City FC 2 (Pereyra Diaz 69, Chhangte 83) bt FC Goa 0 (*MCFC won 5-2 on aggregate*).

With hungry players and a driven coach, Sporting Club Bengaluru scripts a meteoric rise

Kaustub Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

Sporting Club Bengaluru was established only in April 2022. But the side has seen a meteoric rise in a little over two years.

It won the Bangalore Super Division in 2022, secured promotion from I-League 3 to I-League 2 in 2023 and lifted the I-league 2 title in 2024 to make the grade for I-League, the second tier of Indian football.

"We have done the right thing at every level, from the management to the coaching staff to the players," said head coach Chinta Chandrashekar, after Sporting's 1-0 win over FC Bengaluru United in its last game on Saturday.

Triumphant: Sporting Club Bengaluru after winning the 2023-24 I-League 2 title. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"It was important that we had players who were hungry and had something to prove.

"We did not look for high-profile players, but those who were young and raring to go.

"We scouted players from the Santosh Trophy and at the local club level," added Chinta, who hails from Hubballi and has played in the I-League in the past.

Sporting secured the I-League 2 crown quite comfortably, finishing the season with 33 points, six ahead of second-place Goan club Dempo Sports Club. It won 11 out of the 14 matches and a key part of the successful run was the fact that it scored 28 goals in all, seven more than any other team. Sporting also conceded just 12 goals, the lowest for any side.

It helped that Sporting had in its ranks forward Thomyo L. Shimroy, who joined at the beginning of the 2023-24 season.

Thomyo ended up with 11 goals in 14 I-League 2 games, finishing joint top-scorer along with Sahil Harijan of United Sports Club.

"I have been able to score so many goals because of the hard work of the whole team," Thomyo said. "I am looking forward to the I-league next season. It is my dream to play in the I-league and the ISL (Indian Super League)."

THE HINDU GROUP

THE HINDU
THE INFORMED VOTER
QUIZ

1. Which website, known as the voters' service portal, provides information on polling booth details, downloading E-Epic, registering complaints, and more?
2. Which Tamil Nadu constituency set a record in the 1996 Assembly Elections by having the highest number of candidates (1,033) ever to contest an election, a record that still stands?
3. According to the Election Commission's guidelines, what is the maximum distance a polling booth can be from a person's residence?

Visit forms.thehindu.co.in/informed_voter/terms.html
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Scan the code, take the pledge, participate in the quiz and win exciting gift vouchers

Answer to yesterday's quiz:
1. ₹ 25,000
2. Minimum age of Voters was changed from 21 to 18
3. Indian EVMs are not connected to any network including internet

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public is hereby informed that my client **Smt. Prema, W/o Late Prakash,** aged about 76 years, R/at No. G18, SVLN Towers 2, 80 Ft Rd Ratnagiri Nagar, Opp. Sujatha Nagar Bus Stop, Visakhapatnam Andhra Pradesh - 530051 is the Legal heir of Late J.Krishnamurthy Prasad and also a shareholder in the Suit Schedule Properties as described in OS No.73/2011, filed before Prl Senior Civil Judge and CJM at Ramanagaram, Karnataka. My client had constituted and nominated K.Manmohan Prasad, S/o Late J.Krishnamurthy Prasad & Smt Umadevi.,W/o Late Shiva Prasad Pande, to Act as her agent by executing a General power of attorney on 23/11/2022 which GPA was deceit GPA taken by K.Manmohan Prasad, S/o Late J.Krishnamurthy Prasad & Smt Umadevi.,W/o Late Shiva Prasad Pande from my client.

My client hereby informs the general public that she has terminated the aforesaid GPA given to K.Manmohan Prasad, S/o Late J.Krishnamurthy Prasad & Smt Umadevi.,W/o Late Shiva Prasad Pande, as she was not acting in the best interest of my client and hence the said power of attorney is no more valid as the same is legally terminated by Issuing a notice.

The general public is hereby cautioned not to deal with the aforesaid power of attorney holders of my client in any manner about scheduled properties mentioned hereunder as the said GPA is canceled. Any transaction made based on the aforesaid GPA, which had been canceled, shall be illegal and not binding on the interest of my client.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Suit Schedule Properties as mentioned in OS No.73/2011, filed before Prl Senior Civil Judge and CJM at Ramanagaram, Karnataka, which case got disposed on 16/12/2019 and is now pending consideration in the appeal stage in RFA No.34/2021 on the file of Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka.

M.S.Manjanna, Advocate,
Building No. 153/B, Room No.1,
1st Floor, 1st Cross, 5th Main Road,
Chamarajpet, Bengaluru-560 018

IN THE COURT OF THE 2ND ADDL. DISTRICT AND SESSIONS JUDGE AT CHIKKABALLAPUR SITTING AT CHINTAMANI
R.A. No. 63/2021

BETWEEN: Mr. M.S. Venkataramaiah And another ... APPELLANTS
:AND:
Mrs. Gowramma And Others ...RESPONDENTS

Notice under Order 5 Rule 20 of C.P.C. by way of Paper Publication to the Respondent No-2(a), Respondent No-2(B), Respondent No-2(C), Respondent No-2(D), Respondent No-2(E), Respondent No-2(F) and Respondent No-2(H)

To,

2(a). Saraswathamma W/o Late Muniyappa Aged about 70 years, **..Respondent No-2(a)**
2(b). Bhagyamma D/o Late Muniyappa Aged about 51 years, **..Respondent No-2(b)**
2(c). Suma D/o Late Muniyappa Aged about 48 years, **..Respondent No-2(c)**
2(d). Saralamma D/o Late Muniyappa Aged about 46 years, **..Respondent No-2(d)**
2(e). Suguna D/o Late Muniyappa Aged about 42 years, **..Respondent No-2(e)**
2(f). Lakshmidevi D/o Late Muniyappa Aged about 40 years, **..Respondent No-2(f)**
2(h). Meena D/o Late Muniyappa Aged about 38 years, **..Respondent No-2(h)**

All are residing at: Nadipinayakanahalli Village, Jangamakote Hobli, Sidlaghatta Taluk.

Whereas the above named Appellant has preferred an appeal against late **Mr.Muniyappa** and since he is deceased you all need to appear and contest the Appeal.

You are all hereby summoned to appear before this Court on **01.06.2024 at 11 a.m.** in person or through advocate/pleader to answer the question to the same. Failing which the Appeal will be heard and determined as ex-parte.

Given under my hand and seal of the court this 25th day of april 2024.

By Order of the Court
SD/- CHIEF MINISTERIAL OFFICER
2nd Addl. District and Sessions Judge at Chikkaballapur Sitting at Chintamani

Advocate for the Applellants
Sd/- Mrs. Bharathi G., Advocate
No. 190/4, 1st Cross, 1st Main,
Kirloskar Colony, Basaveshwarnagar,
Bengaluru-560079. M: 9448311856

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General public that my clients **1) SRI. R. NANJEGOWDA,** S/o. late. G.N. Ramaiah, **2) SRI. D.R. MANJUNATH,** S/o. late. G.N. Ramaiah, Both are R/at. Doddagubbi Village, and Post, Bidarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk, Bengaluru-562 149, are hereby cancelled the Notarized GPA as Sl.No. 597, Book No. 02/2004, Page No. 91, dated 07.11.2004, before the Shaik Mahaboob, Notary Public, Govt.of India, at Bengaluru, executed in favour **MR. SABU VARGHESE,** S/o. late. T.V. Varghese, R/at. 414, 7th C Main, HRBR 1st Block, Kalyan Nagar, Bengaluru-43, and appointed him as my clients lawful attorney, in respect of the property, Which is morefully described in the schedule hereunder:

The above said GPA has canceled. Therefore, the General public are hereby warned to not to have any sort of transaction with the above said person in respect of the schedule property forthwith. Despite this notice, if anybody enters in to any transaction with the aforesaid person, then it will be at their risk.

SCHEDULE

All the piece and parcel of the property bearing **Sy. No. 37/1, & 42,** Situated **Chikkagubbi Village, Bidarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk.**

Sd/-

L. Subramani, Advocate,
M/s. L.S. ASSOCIATES,
No. 4, 1st Floor, Manjunatha Complex,
4th Main, SSA Road, Hebbal,
Bengaluru-560 024
Mob: 9342839088.
Place: Bengaluru Date: 29.04.2024

IN THE COURT OF HON'BLE V ADDITIONAL DISTRCT AND SESSIONS JUDGE AT DEVANAHALLI
P & SC No. 15008/2024

BETWEEN: P. Sivarajan, S/o Raghunatha Menon, aged about 58 Years, Aadhar No. 3503 1222 2043, Residing At, # 100,Souparnika, Near Ration Shop, Chandranagar, Palakkad, Kerala-678 0007 **... PETITIONER -V/s-**
AND: NIL ... RESPONDENT

GENERAL PUBLIC NOTICE

Take notice that the petitioner have filed the above probate petition for issue of probate in his favour his respect of Will dated 29/10/2021 executed by the deceased Menon Kalathil Ramakrishna @ Ram Menon be granted in favour of the petitioner and thereby granting Succession Certificate in favour of the "Jewel In The Lotus Trust" in respect of the Schedule movable properties.

SCHEDULE
Details of Fixed Deposits & Bank Accounts

SL No.	Account No.	Bank	Amount
1.	0474404000494 Fixed Deposit	Canara Bank Devanahalli	7439074/-
2.	0474404000420 Fixed Deposit	Canara Bank Devanahalli	107821/-
3.	5453101001145	Canara Bank Uganawadi Cross Branch Devanahalli Taluk	118875/-

The above case is posted to **14-06-2024** if any interested person may come and file their objections to the petition filed by them in respect of the relief sought for by the petitioner. As such, please do attend the court on **14-06-2024** at 11:00 AM either in person or through your council, failing which, the matter will be decided on merits.

Given under my hand and the said seal of the court on 25-04-2024.

By order of the court, Chief Ministerial Officer, V ADDL District & Sessios court, Devanahalli.

Advocate for Petitioner: **B.V. ANANDA**
Bangalore.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
Trivandrum Division
Tender Notice No.V/W/TVC/7/2024 Dated 25.04.2024

Divisional Railway Manager/Works Branch/Trivandrum Division, Trivandrum-14 for and on behalf of the President of India Invites ONLINE tenders for the following works as per tender notice and Complete details are given in our e-tender portal **www.ireps.gov.in**

Sl. No.	Description	Approx. Value Rs. (in lakhs)	Earnest Money Deposit Rs.	Period of Completion
1.	DEN/N/TVC jurisdiction-Under water repairs for Br.NoVR-5, EAK 10 and 280UP.	49.43	98900	SIX
2	Brightening of Service buildings, Station buildings, Offices, Staff Quarters, PF Copings, etc., in SSE/W/KTVM section	94.55	189100	SIX
3	ADEN/QLN sub-division-Engaging of semi skilled labour by outsourcing for monsoon night patrollin.	48.15	96300	SIX
4	DEN/South Jurisdiction - Deep screening by BCM Machine 20.00km plain track and 75 turn outs.	132.18	216100	TWELVE
5	Cutting of trees from railway land in TVC P.way section.	20.66	41300	TWELVE
6	DEN South Jurisdiction: TFR on channel sleeper- 464 sleepers.	59.41	118800	SIX
7	DEN/S/TVC Jurisdiction Retaining wall near Gate lodges and level crossing locations.	52.55	105100	SIX
8	1) ERS-Essential repairs to platform surface including replacement of damaged slabs, repairs to trolley path etc. 2) Brightening up of platform shelters ERS, ERN, KUMM	73.68	147400	SIX
9	ERS - ALLP - KYJ Section -Proposed closure of bridge No.EAK 209 by diverting flow via drain through Bridge No. EAK 210.	185.06	242500	EIGHT
10	ADEN/ERS sub-division: Overhauling and maintenance of LC lifting barriers.	91.81	183600	TWELVE
11	TVC Division - Periodical Maintenance of IPL-VPDM line.	46.20	92400	TWELVE

Tender Closing date and time: Sl No: 1 to 11 : 20.05.2024 at 11.00 hrs

Note: It is the responsibility of the tenderer to check any Corrigendum issued for any correction or modifications uploaded subsequently in website; the same shall be taken into account while submitting.

Bharat Coking Coal Limited
A Mini Ratna Company
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)

NOTICE

All the tenders* issued by Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of BCCL **www.bcclweb.in**, Coal India Limited (CIL) e-procurement portal **https://coalindiatenders.nic.in** and Central Public Procurement Portal **https://eprocure.gov.in**. In addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal **https://gem.gov.in**.

*This is applicable to all Open (Domestic/Global) Tenders issued thorugh e-procurement portal of CIL.

SOUTH INDIAN Bank
CIN: L65191KL1929PLC001017

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E-mail: ro1010@sib.co.in.
Website: www.southindianbank.com

RO/BANG/REC/17/24-25 **Date:29.04.2024**

E - AUCTION SALE NOTICE

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6)&9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the borrowers/guarantor that the below described immovable property mortgaged to the South Indian Bank Ltd, Branch Bangalore-Cantonment (Secured Creditor), the Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of The South Indian Bank Limited (Secured Creditor), will be sold on "as is where is" "as is what is" and "whatever there is" condition on **11.06.2024** for recovery of an amount of **Rs.25,22,115.71 (Rupees Twenty Five Lakh Twenty Two Thousand One Hundred Fifteen and paisa seventy one only)** as on **29.04.2024** with future interest, costs and expenses etc. thereon due to The South Indian Bank Limited, Branch Bangalore-Cantonment(Secured Creditor), from the below mentioned Borrower(s) and guarantor(s).**(1) Sri Vincent Joseph**, S/o. Late P V Joseph, and **(2) Smt. Seena Vincent,** W/o. Vincent Joseph, both of them residing at No. B2-1204, Golden Palms Apartment, Hennur Main Road, Near Kristu Jayanti College, K Narayanapura, Bangalore – 560 077.E-mail:**vincentputhanapra@gmail.com** (Both of them also at : Flat No. A1-1004, 10th Floor, Block A, Tower A 1, Golden Palms Apartment, Hennur Main Road, Near Kristu Jayanti College, K Narayanapura, Bangalore – 560 077)

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

Item No 1: All that part and parcel of land measuring East to West : 30 feet, and North to South : 40 feet, totally admeasuring 1200 sq.ft. along with usufructs and improvements thereon, bearing Site No. 59, V.P. Khatha No. 59, formed in Sy. No. 117, formed in Layout known as "CHRIST RESIDENCY", duly converted for residential purpose, situated at Sonnur village, Lakkur Hobli, Malur Taluk, Kolar District owned by Sri Vincent Joseph vide Sale Deed No.1029/2014-15 dated 14.05.2014 of SRO Malur and bounded on the North by : Site No. 58, East by : Layout Road, South by : Site No.60 and West by : Site No. 40.

Reserve Price	**Rs.9,00,000.00** (Rupees Nine Lakh Only)
Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	**Rs.90,000.00** (Rupees Ninety Thousand Only) on or before **07.06.2024**
Bid Increment amount	**Rs.10,000.00** (Rupees Ten Thousand Only)
Date and time of E-auction	**11.06.2024** from **11.00 AM** (with 5 minute unlimited auto extensions till sale is concluded)
Encumbrances known to the Bank	Nill

Item No 2: All that part and parcel of land measuring East to West: 40 feet, and North to South: 30 feet, totally admeasuring 1200 sq.ft. along with usufructs and improvements thereon, bearing Site No. 30, Khatha No. 175/115/1, formed in Sy. No. 115/1 situated at Jagadenahalli village, Lakkur Hobli, Malur Taluk, Kolar District owned by Sri Vincent Joseph vide Sale Deed No. 1564/2011-12 dated 22.07.2011 of SRO Malur and bounded on the North by : Site No. 29, East by : Road, South by : Site No. 31 and West by : Site No. 55.

Reserve Price	**Rs.12,00,000.00** (Rupees Twelve Lakh Only)
Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	**Rs.1,20,000.00** (Rupees One Lakh Twenty Thousand Only) on or before **07.06.2024**
Bid Increment amount	**Rs.10,000.00** (Rupees Ten Thousand Only)
Date and time of E-auction	**11.06.2024** from **02.00 PM** (with 5 minute unlimited auto extensions till sale is concluded)
Encumbrances known to the Bank	Nill

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in web portal of South Indian Bank Ltd, (Secured Creditor) website i.e. **www.southindianbank.com.** Details also available at **https://bankauctions.in**

For any further clarification with regards to inspection of property, terms and conditions of the e-auction or submission of bids, kindly contact South Indian Bank Ltd on **9740866232**

Date : 29.04.2024
Place : Bangalore

Sd/- Authorised Officer (Chief Manager)
The South Indian Bank Ltd.

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, S.GEETHA W/o.Service No.7775525Y/Ex Hav Sundara Raju, R/o #1011, Uma Basavaraju Compound, 5th Cross, Khadripura Main Road, Karanjikatte, Kolar-563101 have changed my name from Geetha to S.Geetha vide affidavit dt: 27.04.2024 sworn before Notary Venkateshappa.N, Kolar Dt.

WE, A Kamala Kannan and D Venilla, R/o No.15, 2nd Cross, Patel Shamana Layout, Horamavu, Near Gandhi Statue, Bengaluru-560043 have changed our minor son name from Shaun Moses K (DOB: 23.09.2006) to K. Shaun Moses vide affidavit dt: 24.04.2024 sworn before Notary A.R.Muneer Ahmed, B'luru

I, SHARON Harish Hegde, S/o Harish Rathnakar Hegde, R/at No.2546/1, E-Block, 9th Cross, 13th Main, Sahakaranagar, Bengaluru North-560092, have changed my name from Sharon Harish Hegde to Sharan Harish Hegde vide affidavit dated 23/04/2024 before Notary C.V. Earappa, Bangalore.

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SHAKUNTLA Verma D/o Hukam Chand Verma R/o 58, Surya Nagar Colony, BOH, Ambala, Haryana 133021 has changed my name from Shakuntala Verma to Shakuntla Verma for all future purposes.

I, ZAKAULLA Khan Hussain, S/o Late Hussain Khan, R/at No.55, 2nd South Cross Street, R K Garden, Umar Farooq Masjid, Neelasandra, Bangalore - 560047 have changed my name from Zakaulla Khan Hussain to Zakaulla Khan vide affidavit dated 25/04/2024 before Notary K V Mani, Bengaluru.

I, RAVI, S/o Sadashivareddy Patil, R/at No.8-11-184/248, D-66, Krishnadevaraya Nagar, Raichur-584103 Karnataka have changed my name from Ravi to Ravi S Patil vide affidavit dated 27/04/2024 before Notary K V Mani, Bengaluru.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General public that my clients **1) SRI. R. NANJEGOWDA,** S/o. late. G.N. Ramaiah, **2) SRI. D.R. MANJUNATH,** S/o. late. G.N. Ramaiah, Both are R/at. Doddagubbi Village, and Post, Bidarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk, Bengaluru-562 149, are hereby cancelled the Notarized GPA as Sl.No. 597, Book No. 02/2004, Page No. 91, dated 07.11.2004, before the Shaik Mahaboob, Notary Public, Govt.of India, at Bengaluru, executed in favour **MR. SABU VARGHESE,** S/o. late. T.V. Varghese, R/at. 414, 7th C Main, HRBR 1st Block, Kalyan Nagar, Bengaluru-43, and appointed him as my clients lawful attorney, in respect of the property, Which is morefully described in the schedule hereunder:

The above said GPA has canceled. Therefore, the General public are hereby warned to not to have any sort of transaction with the above said person in respect of the schedule property forthwith. Despite this notice, if anybody enters in to any transaction with the aforesaid person, then it will be at their risk.

SCHEDULE

All the piece and parcel of the property bearing **Sy. No. 37/1, & 42,** Situated **Chikkagubbi Village, Bidarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk.**

Sd/-

L. Subramani, Advocate,
M/s. L.S. ASSOCIATES,
No. 4, 1st Floor, Manjunatha Complex,
4th Main, SSA Road, Hebbal,
Bengaluru-560 024
Mob: 9342839088.
Place: Bengaluru Date: 29.04.2024

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POONAWALLA FINCORP LIMITED

Enabling Dreams

A Year of Significant Milestones & Successful Transformation

- ✔ AUM Crosses ₹ 25,000 Crore
- ✔ PAT Crosses ₹ 1000 Crore
- ✔ Rated AAA by CRISIL & CARE Ratings

"I feel elated and proud of the last 3 years' journey to spearhead the most successful transformation of Poonawalla Fincorp that the NBFC space has ever witnessed. Our differentiated stratetgy and relentless execution are reflected across all business metrics and have made us a thought leader in the lending space."

CA Abhay Bhutada
Managing Director

FY24 Standalone Key Financial Highlights

Highest Ever Profitability

PAT	RoA
₹ 1027 Cr.	5.24%
+83% YoY ↑	+100 bps YoY ↑

Highest Ever Business

Disbursement	AUM
₹ 33,289 Cr.	₹ 25,003 Cr.
+111% YoY ↑	+55% YoY ↑

Best-in-Class Asset Quality

GNPA	NNPA
1.16%	0.59%
-28 bps YoY ↓	-19 bps YoY ↓

Scalable Business Model

Digital-First Tech-Led

Customer-Centric Approach

Customized loan products for every financial need

- Business Loan
- Professional Loan
- Personal Loan
- Pre-Owned Car Loan
- Loan Against Property
- Medical Equipment Loan
- Consumer Loan
- Machinery Loan

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